Resource Guide for CRISIS MANAGEMENT in Virginia Schools

RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR
CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN
VIRGINIA SCHOOLS

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for the

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How to Use This Resource Guide

Overview of the Resource Guide for Crisis Management in Schools

This Resource Guide includes a compilation of the most "user Friendly" examples of policies, procedures, guidelines, checklists, forms and background information. Narrative is limited to that which is necessary to establish basic understandings and to guide the reader from section to section.

The Resource Guide has borrowed heavily from Virginia school divisions as well as from national resources. A conscientious effort has been made to cite sources for each item included. Where no source is cited, the item has, in most cases, been developed for this Resource Guide.

Organization

This Resource Guide is organized to support the development and implementation of a systematic crisis management plan. It is designed to be used as a general resource and a training tool.

Section I. Policy and Leadership provides an introductory overview of the essential elements of effective crisis management, focusing on policy and leadership which establish the framework and impetus for effective planning. It sets forth a comprehensive conceptual framework for policy development and action which includes provisions for 1) pre-incident identification/intervention, 2) crisis response, and 3) critical incident management involving the orchestration of school and community public safety resources. In this section crisis management is examined primarily from the school division-level perspective. Elements of typical school division policies are identified and a sample policy is provided. Roles of the division superintendent and key central office staff are detailed. This section also addresses leadership at the individual school level, briefly examining the role of the school principal.

Section II. Establishing the Crisis Response Team examines identifies three levels of response — individual school, school division central office, and community — which constitute a network to support action. Expertise needed on each team is described and a detailed list of roles and responsibilities for Crisis Response Team members is provided.

Section III. Developing an Effective Crisis Management Plan concentrates on the crisis response planning process and includes numerous samples of procedures, checklists, and forms. The focus here is primarily on responding to the unfortunate but more frequently occurring crises such as deaths of students and teachers by accidents or illnesses and other events which can affect the school community for days but do not involve critical incidents such as school shootings. These procedures are intended to be time-limited, problem-focused interventions designed to determine the facts, disseminate accurate information, restore equilibrium, and support productive, appropriate responses. Included in this section are basic elements of preparation for a crisis response, issues of

loss, and postvention strategies to restore equilibium. The section concludes with a sub-section focusing on suicide.

Section IV. Critical Incident Management focuses more narrowly on preparation for and response to critical incidents such as shootings, terrorism, and weather-related disasters. This section focuses first on key pre-incident strategies which experience has taught are important in identifying and assessing potential threats. Section IV provides "best practices" information of practical use to schools from credible sources and based on "lessons learned" from recent experiences with school shootings. In the case of terrorism, information and insights are continuing to emerge to form some very preliminary "lessons learned." Although no identifiable set of "best practices" have yet emerged, a concerted effort has been made to provide useful information from credible sources.

Section V. Training for Preparedness highlights training and the maintenance of preparedness. It includes a discussion of training needs, sample agendas, and related sample training materials as well as checklists for remaining prepared through periodic review of Crisis Management Plans and ongoing training.

Section VI. Communications deals with the issue of communication — within the school, with parents and the community at large, and — often most challenging — with the media. Included are strategies for effective and timely communication, sample announcements, statements, and letters for use within the school and with parents, and an extensive section on working with the media.

Section VII. Quick Guide to Crisis Management provides a variety of samples of guidelines and checklists for the management of selected crises, arranged alphabetically for quick reference.

Section VIII. Resources includes a list of agencies and organizations which provide crisis management-related information and support. The section concludes with a list of references.

Related Readings are cited throughout the Resource Guide. Look for the following icon:

I. Policy and Leadership

Crisis Management and School Safety

A crisis can occur at any time whether or not we plan for it, and it is unlikely that any school will escape the necessity of responding to a significant crisis. A crisis can impact a single school, the entire school division, or, as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks demonstrated, the entire nation.

For the purposes of this Resource Guide, "crisis" is defined as:

A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death.

Crisis management is a central component of comprehensive School Safety. The most important consideration in both crisis management and school safety efforts is the **health, safety and welfare** of the students and staff.

A comprehensive approach to school safety places a strong emphasis on prevention using strategies which range from building design to discipline policies and programs which improve school climate.

Crisis Management

- **Anticipates Problems**
- **Establishes a coordinated response**

Crisis management is that part of a school division's approach to school safety which anticipates potential problems and establishes a coordinated response to minimize stress and disruptions in the school community.

Crisis management functions as a time-limited, problem-focused intervention designed to identify, confront and resolve the crisis, restore equilibrium, and support appropriate adaptive responses.

Policy

Policy: The Foundation and Framework for Action

The chances of effectively managing a crisis are increased with a division level policy and individual school plans which operate within the framework of the division policy, but are tailored to the conditions and resources of the individual school.

Benefits of Policies and Procedures for Crisis Management

Policies and procedures for crisis management provide benefits for students, parents, and the school division.
- The procedures provide an organized, systematic method for helping students.
- Staff members know under what circumstances and how to refer a student for help.
- Crisis team members operate within specified guidelines to make collaborative decisions, sharing the responsibility of these often difficult and stressful situations.
- Parents and other members of the community are assured that the school division has taken action to be prepared in the event of a crisis situation.
- The school division benefits through increased legal protection. While no set of policies can prevent a lawsuit being filed, establishing reasonable policies and procedures based on "best practices" provides a margin of protection against liability.
- Interagency agreements have fostered stronger collaborative relationships and have led to improved communication with community public safety agencies.

"There are two types of school administrators: those who have faced a crisis and those who are about to."

Ron Stephens, Executive Director, National School Safety Center.

A Framework for Policy Development and Action

A comprehensive crisis management policy is designed to effectively address a range of existing and potential student and school crises by including provisions for 1) pre-incident identification/intervention, 2) crisis response, and 3) critical incident management requiring collaboration between school and community public safety resources.

Pre-Incident Identification/Intervention Procedures

Pre-incident identification/intervention procedures provide **a systematic process for identifying, assessing, and intervening** with students who may be suicidal or constitute a potential or imminent threat to others. These procedures are designed to prevent or reduce risk to the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff. Policy establishing such procedures involves:

- training of students and staff to recognize warning signs of risk;
- immediate, mandatory reporting of concerns;
- qualified assessment of threats; and,
- expedited access to school and/or community resources for appropriate intervention.

Crisis Response Procedures

Crisis response procedures guide staff in **responding to the more frequently occurring crises** such as the death of a student or teacher by accident or illness, suicide threat, or vehicle crashes, but do not necessarily address critical incidents such as school shootings or hostage-taking. These procedures are intended to be time-limited, problem-focused interventions designed to determine the facts, disseminate accurate information, restore equilibrium, and support productive, appropriate responses. The crisis team uses crisis response procedures to help school administrators:

- gather accurate information about the event;
- disseminate accurate information to staff, students, parents, and, if appropriate, the media;
- intervene directly with students most likely to be affected;
- increase the available supportive counseling for students and staff; and,
- guide students and staff to engage in productive, appropriate responses.

Critical Incident Procedures

Critical incident procedures **focus narrowly on situations which involve imminent danger to life and limb** such as school violence with death or major injuries, natural disasters, and terrorist acts. ***Such procedures emphasize a coordinated interagency response*** and are designed primarily to preserve and protect life. Sound policy requires the development, *in advance of a critical incident*, of interagency agreements that specify channels of communication, types of services, and areas of responsibility. Such interagency agreements typically are established with public safety (i.e., police department, sheriff's office, fire department, emergency services) and mental health agencies (i.e., Community Services Board).

Framework for Policy Development and Action			
	Pre-Incident Identification / Intervention	**Crisis Response**	**Critical Incident Response**
Target of response	**a systematic process for identifying, assessing, and intervening** with students who may be suicidal or constitute a potential or imminent threat to others	guide staff in **respon-ding to the more fre-quently occurring crises** such as the death of a student or teacher by accident or illness, suicide threat, or vehicle crashes, but do not necessarily address critical incidents such as school shootings or hostage-taking	**focus narrowly on situations which involve imminent danger to life and limb** such as school violence with death or major injuries, natural disasters, and terrorist acts; ***procedures emphasize a coor-dinated interagency response***.
Designed	To prevent or reduce risk to the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff	To be time-limited, problem-focused interventions designed to determine the facts, disseminate accurate information, restore equilibrium, and support productive, appropriate responses.	Primarily to preserve and protect life
Involves	- training of students and staff to recognize warning signs of risk; - immediate, mandatory reporting of concerns; qualified assessment of threats; and, - expedited access to school and/or community resources for appropriate intervention.	- gathering accurate information about the event; - disseminating accurate information to staff, students, parents, and, if appropriate, the media; - intervening directly with students most likely to be affected; - increasing the available supportive counseling for students and staff; and, - guiding students and staff to engage in productive, appropriate responses.	- interagency agree-ments developed ***in advance***, specifying channels of com-munication, types of services, and areas of responsibility. - agreements typically established with public safety and mental health agencies.

School Division Policy

Essential Elements of Crisis Management

The essential elements of effective crisis management in schools include the following:

Policy and Leadership – Policy provides both a foundation and a framework for action. The chances of effectively managing a crisis are increased with a division level plan and individual building plans which operate within the framework of the division plan, but are tailored to the conditions and resources of the individual school. Leadership is necessary to ensure effective implementation of plans and maintenance of preparedness.

Crisis Response Team – A school Crisis Response Team can be a highly effective organizational unit for dealing with a variety of crises. Such teams can operate at three levels: individual school building, central office, and community. Well-functioning teams at each level provide a network that can support action whenever crises arise.

School Crisis Management Plan – A school that is prepared before a crisis occurs will be much more likely to deal with students and staff effectively. The plan is designed to result in a differentiated, coordinated response to the more frequently occurring crises such as the death of a student or teacher by accident or illness, suicide threat, or vehicle crashes.

Critical Incident Management Plan – A critical incident management plan focuses more narrowly on situations that involve imminent danger to life and limb and require a coordinated interagency response involving public safety resources. Such responses are organized using an Incident Command System (ICS), part of a Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

Training for Preparedness – Preparation for and response to crises rely on people understanding policies and procedures and knowing what they are to do. These are achieved through training. Maintaining preparedness is an ongoing process which involves debriefing following crises, periodic review, updating, and ongoing training. **An unprepared school is asking for chaos.**

Communications – When a crisis occurs, effective communication is essential — within the school and the school division, with parents and the community at large, and with the media. Effective communication can speed the restoration of equilibrium; **poor communication can make a bad situation much worse.**

School division policies typically include the following elements:

- a definition of "crisis;"
- a requirement that each school establish a crisis management team and development of a school site crisis management plan;
- specifications for membership of the crisis management team and development of a crisis management plan;
- specifications for issues to be addressed in each school's crisis management plan, usually including designation of chain of command, development of protocols for management of specific types of crises, coordination of communications, provisions for support services, staff in-service training, and periodic review of the plan.
- Specifications for development with appropriate community public safety and other agencies of a critical incident management plan.

A sample policy statement from a Virginia school division is provided on the following pages:

"A coordinated district-wide crisis response is no accident. It reflects prevention, intervention, and rehearsed reaction."

Educational Leadership
November 1994

SAMPLE SCHOOL DIVISION POLICY

Crisis Management Planning

A. Definitions

1. "Crisis incidents" shall include but not be limited to situations involving the death of a student, staff member, or a member of a student's immediate family by suicide, illness, or accident. The school principal shall have the authority to determine what is a crisis incident and when to convene the Crisis Management Team.

2. "Critical incidents" shall include situations involving threats of harm to students, personnel, or facilities. Critical incidents include but are not limited to natural disasters, fire, use of weapons / explosives, and the taking of hostages. Such incidents require an interagency response involving law enforcement and / or emergency services agencies.

3. The individual school "Crisis Management Plan" shall be a written plan with explicit intent to protect and sustain life, reduce emotional trauma, assist in emotional recovery from trauma, minimize personal injury and/or damage to the facility. Individual school plans shall be open to public inspection.

B. Crisis Management Team

Individual School Crisis Management Team shall be established at each school to meet the demands of crisis incidents.

1. Membership: The crisis team shall consist of an immediately accessible core group who have the knowledge and skills to act in any emergency and shall include the principal, assistant principal, one or more guidance counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, nurse/clinic attendant, one or more selected teachers, and a person to record events/minutes of meetings. As needed, the school resource officer and other community mental health and public safety representatives may be asked to consult with the school team. A roster of team members is to be posted in each school administration office.

2. Purposes: The Crisis Team shall implement and adapt appropriate action from the Crisis Management Plan to address the specific circumstances of the crisis. Roles and responsibilities of team members and consultants will be established in the school's written Crisis Management Plan.

C. Crisis Management Plan

Each school Crisis Management Plan shall include provisions for preparation/planning, intervention/response, and post-emergency activities, including the establishment or designation of the following:

1. Explicit procedures for each crisis incident.

2. Crisis headquarters and command post outside the school facility in the event building evacuation is necessary.

3. Chain of command in the event a key administrator is not available.

4. Spokesperson to the media. This person will be the principal or designee and is responsible for gathering and confirming all pertinent information about the incident and for informing the school division's public information officer prior to any media release. The spokesperson will also designate a media reception area when deemed appropriate.

5. Network of key communicators. It is the responsibility of these key individuals to convey approved information to others. This network may include phone trees to notify staff of emergency incidents and special meetings which may occur before or after school hours. It should also include counselors designated to support groups such as students, faculty, and parents.

6. Communication plan within the school and to the community. The best means of communication may vary with the crisis. However, the plan must provide for communicating with teachers as soon as possible. When appropriate, well-informed representatives should be ready to go into classrooms. Avoid giving news via assembly or public address systems as results can be unpredictable when giving shocking news to large groups of students. To ensure accuracy and avoid rumor, information to students must come directly from internal memoranda or statements written specifically for that purpose and approved by the principal. News is best given to students in class so they can ask questions of a person they know. Questions from parents should also be addressed from a prepare-approved fact sheet.

7. Arrangement for support services. One individual from the Crisis Management Team will be designated to contact the school board office and to contact, as needed, other community resources such as mental health services in accordance with the school division Memorandum of Understanding. The school board office will arrange for assistance, as needed, for additional school psychologists, school social workers, and guidance counselors. School arrangements should include the designation of meeting spaces, provisions to request on-call services to meet unexpected demand, and provision of long-term follow-up.

8. Bring closure to the crisis. This activity will vary depending on the crisis. But it is imperative to recognize officially the end of the crisis and the beginning of the healing process. This may include a review of the incident and the implementation of the plan.

9. Evaluation of the crisis plan. Response to each crisis event will be reviewed and evaluated at the conclusion of each event. In addition, the Crisis Management Team will evaluate annually the plan and its effectiveness and make modifications in accordance with school board policy, as needed.

D. Critical Incident Management Plan

1. A Critical Incident Management Plan shall be developed in accordance with Joint Memorandum of Understanding executed between the school division and the Police Department, Fire Department, and Department of Emergency Services.

2. Specific school procedures shall reflect utilization of an Incident Command System and specify the key school-based procedures and methods of communication.

E. Crisis Management Training

The Crisis Management Plan, including procedures for the identification of potential threats, shall be reviewed annually with the full school staff and shared with all transient staff, nurse/clinic attendants, secretaries, cafeteria staff, custodians, and bus drivers. Schools are encouraged to provide additional in-service training on specific crisis related topics such as substance abuse, neglect and abuse, and suicide prevention.

A Crisis Management Plan is intended to . . .

- **protect and sustain life**
- **reduce emotional trauma**
- **assist emotional recovery**
- **minimize injury/damage**

Leadership

Policy provides the foundation and framework for crisis management. **Leadership,** however, is necessary to ensure effective implementation and maintenance of preparedness.

Why should school leaders make Crisis Management a priority?

The legal obligation of school administrators to make crisis plans has been outlined by Peterson and Straub (1992) who cited the growing trend to hold the third party (school) responsible for failing to take reasonable steps to prevent a crisis or to adequately manage a crisis situation which arises. Indeed, the families of victims of school shootings in all six of the fatal shootings in from 1999 to 2001 have filed lawsuits seeking damages (Simpson, 2001).

While schools cannot eliminate the risk of being sued, they can reduce that risk and/or limit their exposure for damages by developing comprehensive crisis plans which anticipate the potential for crises and develop reasonable procedures for appropriate responses based on "best practices."

In recent years, planning that involves public safety expertise and procedures that establish a coordinated, interagency response to critical incidents have taken on heightened importance. Written documentation of activities and consultation with the school board attorney are now routine elements of crisis response / critical incident management.

Many states have enacted legislation to address these issues, and are requiring schools to develop crisis management procedures, often as a component of school safety plans. In Virginia, §22.1-279.8, *Code of Virginia*, requires schools to have written school and emergency management plans.

"School crisis and emergency management plan" means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency, including natural disasters involving fire, flood, tornadoes, or other severe weather; loss or disruption of power, water, communications or shelter; bus or other accidents; medical emergencies; student or staff member deaths; explosions; bomb threats; gun, knife or other weapons threats; spills or exposures to hazardous substances; the presence of unauthorized persons or trespassers; the loss, disappearance or kidnapping of a student; hostage situations; violence on school property or at school activities; and other incidents posing a serious threat of harm to students, personnel, or facilities."
      - §22.1-279.8, *Code of Virginia*

Poland (1994) advises that school crisis planning be viewed as "an ever evolving task that needs to be listed as a priority on the job descriptions." Making preparedness a priority may require **building crisis planning into job descriptions, personnel evaluations, and school audits**. Two useful strategies are:

- explicitly listing crisis planning as an area of responsibility in job descriptions and on principal (personnel) evaluations; and

- explicitly identifying crisis preparedness (including having a plan and conducting related training and periodic reviews) as an area to be assessed in individual school audits.

Leadership at the Central Office Level

Leadership at the central office staff level is critical to the successful management of school emergencies. School division staff support the implementation of school board policy in individual schools. When major school crises occur, the central office staff must be prepared to assist in major areas, allowing school staff to deal with the immediate needs of students, staff, and parents.

Pitcher and Poland (1992) note that

"to actually train and maintain a fully functional crisis team is a significant commitment of district resources and time . . . Further, if crisis teams are to be available at each building, it will be necessary to enforce the responsibility and ensure that each building principal is invested in the effort" (p. 144).

Noting that no one person can do everything, they recommend a "crisis team" approach at both the school division and school building levels.

School Division Central Office Crisis Planning and Response Team

Areas of response at the school division level may be conceptualized as represented below:

| Public Safety Officials | ------- | Superintendent |

Senior Management

Community Relations

Student Services

Facilities and Operational Support

Instruction

Finance / Human Resources

Transportation

Technology / Information Services
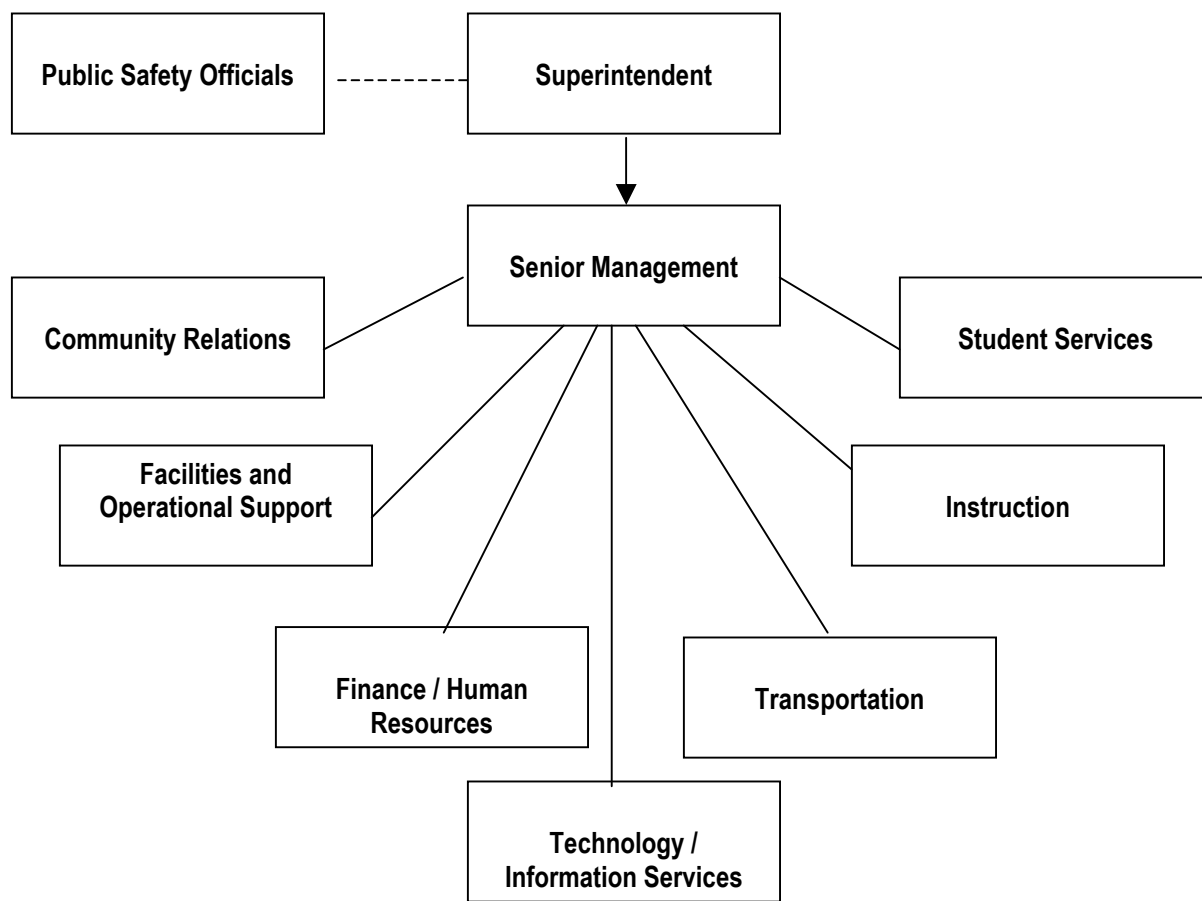
Roles and Responsibilities

The possible Central Office functions listed below have been identified and may be considered in assigning Central Office staff roles during an emergency. **Roles and responsibilities to be assigned as part of an Incident Command System (ICS) are set forth in Section V.**

Senior Management Roles

(Superintendent, Deputy and Assistant Superintendents)

- Direct all operations of the school division in the management of the emergency.

- Gather information from all aspects of the emergency for use in making appropriate decisions about the management of the emergency.

- Assess the immediate situation and assign tasks based on the overall needs for managing the emergency.

- Stay in contact with the leaders of the emergency service agencies and the law enforcement agencies working the emergency.

- Authorize the release of information to the public.

- Keep the School Board and other local officials informed of the status of the emergency.

- Receive state and local officials who come to help or gather information.

- Report immediately to the local hospital if students or adults are being sent to that hospital for treatment. If more than one hospital is admitting students or adults, coordinate the communication among those hospitals and the school division. Assign and direct other division staff to assist at those hospitals.

- Coordinate communication between the hospital and the division office.

- Meet and talk with the parents of students and spouses of adults who have been admitted to the hospital.

- Establish and maintain lines of communication between the division and the emergency site; for off-campus emergency, lines of communication must be established for the involved school, as well. Such lines of communication may also include couriers.

- Communicate with other schools in the division during the emergency period.

- Assign resources (persons and materials) to various sites for specific needs. This may include the assignment of school personnel from other school or community sites such as community emergency shelters.

- Authorize immediate purchase of outside services and materials needed for the management of emergency situations.

Student Services Roles

- Implement plan for crisis; authorize and coordinate back-up student support personnel from other schools to assist, as needed, at crisis site(s).

- Maintain active file of helping agencies within the community including the names of contact person(s).

- Create letters to notify parents of continuing care that is available to students; available care will include local and state agencies, as well as school-based care.

- Develop information sheet for parents, teachers, and others; information will include topics such as the impact of crises on students, signs of stress, and guidelines for dealing effectively with crisis-related stress.

- Assist with planning and conducting parent/community meetings for information dissemination and postvention activities.

- Maintain follow-up activities such as referrals for help outside the school services setting.

- Confer with full staff and faculty; assist in coordination of briefings for staff and faculty.

- Make recommendations regarding the restarting of school and schedule of activities for the day after the crisis.

Community Relations Roles

- Collect and disseminate information to the media. Be aware of deadlines, the need for information accuracy, and other issues related to the media and the performance of their jobs.

- Plan and coordinate press interviews to help the news media meet deadlines.

- Create and disseminate press releases.

- Respond to rumors through the dissemination of accurate information. Organize a network of key people within the community through which accurate information can be disseminated.

- Be aware of the requirements of the Freedom of Information and provide all appropriate information based on those requirements.

- Plan and coordinate the use of the Division's cable television channel for live and taped presentations. Press conferences can go out live; updates for the public can be taped and aired as needed.

- Coordinate information to be shared with school and division personnel during and after the crisis.

- Act as a liaison between the media and division personnel whose attention must be focused on the immediate problems of managing the crisis without constant interruption.

- Arrange interviews for the media with key school and division staff who are involved in the emergency or who act as spokespersons for the division.

- Establish and maintain a clearinghouse for calls and requests from schools, the community, parents, and the media and refer those to the appropriate person or place.

Facilities and Support Services Roles

- Coordinate with transportation coordinator as needed.

- Serve as a liaison between the emergency school site and the emergency support teams that may be needed.

- Coordinate and direct communication between the emergency site and county and state agencies.

- Obtain and direct the placement of generators when power must be restored for a temporary period.

- Coordinate and direct the acquisition of water when there is a disruption of water and sewer services.

- Coordinate and direct contact with emergency medical services, local police and sheriffs departments, fire departments, and the state police.

- Coordinate and direct search-and-rescue operations when needed.

- Arrange for the delivery of outside services and materials needed for the management of the emergency.

- Plan and initiate arrangements for food for building personnel.

Transportation Role

- Establish and maintain school division protocols for transportation-related emergencies.

- Provide division-wide transportation for bus drivers.

- Establish and maintain plans for the emergency transport of students and school plans (a chemical spill for example).

- Coordinate transportation plans with State Police and other law enforcement personnel, as appropriate.

Technology/Information Services Role

- Coordinate use of technology.

- Assist in establishment/maintenance of emergency communications network. Assist in obtaining needed student and staff information from the computer files.

- Prepare and maintain an emergency kit that contains floor plans, telephone line locations, computer locations, and other communications equipment.

- Establish and maintain computer communication with the central office and with other agencies capable of such communication.

- Establish and maintain, as needed, a stand-alone computer with student and staff database for use at the emergency site.

- As needed, report various sites involved in the communication system if there are problems in that system.

SAMPLE CENTRAL OFFICE CRISIS TEAM ROSTER

Position/Role	Name	e-mail	Work Phone	Fax	Home Phone	Cell Phone / Pager
Administration						
Ass't Supt*						
Facilities Liaison						
Human Resources						
Information Technology						
Media Liaison / Community Relations						
Others						
Safety / Security Liaison						
Student Services						
Superintendent						
Transportation Liaison						

* Designee in the event the Superintendent is not available.

Leadership at the Individual School Level

Leadership of the school principal is crucial for effective Crisis Management. As the highest level executive in the school, the principal bears responsibility for all decisions and activities. Leadership involves making crisis management a priority and communicating about its importance —

"What is a priority to the Principal becomes important to everyone at the school."

Preparing for Crisis Management Leadership: Steps for Principals

Step 1.   Review division-wide policies related to crisis and emergency management, including any interagency agreements. Gain a clear understanding of the channels of communication, lines of authority, and roles and responsibilities of both school division and community agency personnel.

Step 2.   Establish a school crisis team and work with them to develop a school crisis plan within the framework of division policy and tailored to the school's unique needs.

Step 3.   Establish a clear chain of command within your school. Clearly designate who is in charge in case of an emergency when you are away from the school.

Step 4.   Make a point of meeting, in *advance of an emergency*, community public safety personnel who will respond to an emergency at your school. Consult with them in developing your school's plan and maintain the collaborative relationships.

Step 5.   Become thoroughly familiar with the school building and grounds, including the mechanical infrastructure.

Step 6.   Ensure that all staff members understand the school's crisis management plan and particularly their specific responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Step 7.   Prepare students to assume an appropriate role by enlisting their vigilance and conducting practice drills.

Step 8.   Communicate the school's crisis management plan to parents and the community at large.

II. Establishing the Crisis Response Team

Three Levels of Response

A school Crisis Response Team can be a highly effective organizational unit for dealing with a variety of crises such as accidents, drug overdoses, suicides, incidents of violence, and weather emergencies. Crisis Response Teams in a school division can operate at three levels: 1) individual school, 2) school division, and 3) community response teams. Well-functioning teams at each level provide a network capable of a comprehensive, coordinated response.

School Level Crisis Response Team

The building-level team is led by the principal, with an alternate leader designated to assume the leadership role in the principal's absence. In addition to teachers, the team may include guidance counselor(s), the school nurse, school psychologist and / or school social worker, school secretary, and custodian. School resource officers also often serve on school crisis response teams. When school resource officers are assigned to a school, they should be consulted in the development of the school's crisis management plan and involved in response to any crisis involving a violation of law or threat to public safety. The school level crisis response team typically has responsibility for the following:

- Establishing a written protocol for dealing with crises.

- Establishing a systematic approach for identifying, referring, and intervening with students identified as at-risk for suicide or posing a threat to others.

- Orienting staff to procedures and training to fulfill designated roles, including conducting table-tip simulations and practice drills.

- Providing information to students, staff, and community on crisis management referral procedures.

- Providing assistance during a crisis in accordance with designated roles and providing follow-up activities.

- Conducting debriefing at the conclusion of each crisis episode to critique the effectiveness of the building's Crisis Management Plan.

- Conducting periodic reviews and updating of the Crisis Management Plan and conducting related updated staff training.

Central Office Crisis Response Network

In addition to individual school crisis response teams, the crisis network should include a crisis response team at the school division central office level. This team may include the division superintendent or designee and senior administrators in key school division areas of operation. The central office team consults with community public safety and mental health agencies and takes the lead in developing and maintaining interagency memoranda of understanding defining interagency responses to crises. The central office crisis network would typically have responsibility for the following:

- Overseeing and coordinating the school level teams.

- Authorizing resources for areas where they are most needed. As an example, providing more counselors to a school whose staff may be overburdened in dealing with a crisis.

- Collecting and disseminating educational materials to schools for training crisis team members and faculty.

- Establishing a central library of materials on violence, suicide, and other crisis management issues for use by faculty, staff, and students.

- Conducting mock crisis events to practice and test the crisis management procedures.

- Evaluating responses to crises with a report to the Superintendent and a plan for follow-up.

- Establishing a community support team and encouraging input and support from its members.

Detailed descriptions of the roles for central office staff during a school crisis response are included in Section I. Policy and Leadership.

Community Crisis Response Support Network

Crisis Response: The school crisis network is community-based and involves community agencies and organizations such as mental health, public safety, health and social services that can be instrumental in restoring equilibrium and supporting appropriate adaptive responses to crisis events. Schools should maintain regular contact with community agencies and organizations in the community support network and invite them to participate in meetings with school and central office crisis management teams.

Critical Incident Response: The community interagency response required for critical incidents is described in Section V. Such responses typically employ an Incident Command System (ICS) as part of a larger Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

School Crisis Response Team Roles and Responsibilities

Duties of Members of the School Crisis Response Team

The **Principal** coordinates and supervises crisis management activities at the school. Duties include:

- Continuity of administration.

- Development of a comprehensive school emergency management program.

- Designation and training of a school Crisis Team.

- Designation of an Emergency Operations Center or command post (may be changed by responsible county public safety officials.)

- Monitor developing situations such as weather conditions or incidents in the community that may impact the school.

- Implement lockdown and/or evacuation procedures and measures to control access to affected area.

- Keep city officials, division staff and school personnel informed of developing situations and initiate emergency notifications and warnings.

- Direct emergency operations until public safety officials arrive on scene. Serve as a liaison to public safety personnel once they arrive on the scene.

- Authorize the release of information to the public.

- Coordinate use of building as public shelter for major emergencies occurring in the city.

Teachers are responsible for implementing appropriate procedures to protect students. These responsibilities include:

- Evacuation - Prepare individual classroom emergency kit. Direct and supervise students en route to pre-designated safe areas within the school or to an off-site evacuation shelter.

- Classroom lockdown – Conduct classroom lockdown procedures in accordance with established procedures.

- Student accounting - Verify the location and status of students. Report to the principal or designee on the condition of any student who needs additional assistance.

- Student assembly / holding areas - Maintain order while in student assembly / holding areas to facilitate orderly student accounting and release or transport.

- Establish a partner system to pair teachers and classes so that some teachers can assist with other tasks such as first aid, search and rescue, or community relations.

- Remain with assigned students throughout the duration of the emergency, unless otherwise assigned through a partner system or until every student has been released through the official student release process.

Public Information Officer (PIO) - The school staff will release information to parents and to the general public only through a designated PIO. This may be the Superintendent of Schools, principal or other designated individual. Duties include:

- Identify a potential "news center" or media holding area site away from emergency operations where media representatives can receive briefings.

- Prepare public information kit including identification, maps, supplies, signs, forms, sample news releases, battery-powered radio, and school information.

- Collect, verify and disseminate information to the media. Coordinate information with on-site command and the administration PIO prior to release. In cooperation with local public safety officials, considers establishing a Joint Information Center to ensure coordination of information being distributed.

- Establish regular time schedule for news briefings and periodic updates.

- Provide information in appropriate format for the general public including a format for sensory impaired or non-English speaking persons, if needed.

Office Manager (Secretary and Office Staff) - The administrative secretarial staff has primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining emergency communications including exchange of information with school administration staff, community emergency responders (fire, police, EMS, emergency services coordinator) and internal communication within the school building. Primary responsibility for record keeping also lies with this position.

- Establish procedures for emergency communications with school administration staff in compliance with school system plans.

- Establish internal emergency communications including provisions for two-way communications with classrooms and with classes on the playground or other sites.

- In an emergency, establish and maintain communications with school administration.

- Establish and maintain communications with the emergency services coordinator, as needed in major emergencies.

- Initiate and maintain incident log.

- Receive and maintain student accounting forms.

- Report status of students, staff and school facilities to school administration as specified.

Assistant Principal - Tasks related to student accounting and student release.

- Establishes procedures for assessing and reporting status of students in an emergency or any event that results in evacuation or relocation of students.

- Provides instruction and practice to all teachers and staff in the student assessment and reporting process.

- Ensures that all classrooms are equipped with an "emergency kit."

- Establishes procedures for communication with teachers and other school staff during an emergency.

- In an emergency - receives reports from all teachers on the condition and location of every student.

- Assigns persons to investigate reports of any students missing, injured or ill, or otherwise not in compliance with student accounting reports.

- Implements student release procedures.

Maintenance Head - Maintenance staff are familiar with the operations and infrastructure of the school building and are responsible for the stabilization of the building, controlling access, and securing the school facilities:

- Inventory all hazardous materials, portable and fixed equipment, and utility lines in or near the school.

- Establish procedures for isolating hazardous areas.

- In an emergency, survey damage and structural stability of buildings and utilities and report to the principal.

- Search the affected sections of the school for students or staff that may be confined or injured; however, do not put yourself or others at risk. This task may need to be accomplished by trained public safety professionals.

- Implement building access control measures.

- Secure student assembly areas.

- Assist local officials in damage assessment.

- Assist administrators in recovery procedures.

Student Roles in Crisis Management

Roles for students have only recently been recognized as an important aspect of crisis management. In the past, they have typically been viewed in a more passive role, simply expected to comply with adult directives. However, as students have demonstrated their abilities in school-based conflict mediation, peer helping, and crime prevention activities, their potential to assume a more active role has begun to be recognized. Certainly, the adults continue to bear the central responsibility for leadership in crisis planning and response and, in the case of a crisis event, for taking action to protect students. There are, however, at least three areas in which students may play important roles: 1) response, 2) postvention, and 3) prevention.

Response
Students need orientation and practice in crisis response procedures such as evacuation and lockdown, including -- particularly with older students -- actions to be taken in the event of teacher incapacitation.

Postvention
Student buy-in to postvention activities and development of positive adaptive responses are critical to regaining equilibrium. Students are strategically positioned to recognize distress in their peers and to refer them for services if the expectation for involvement is communicated and avenues for referral are established.

Prevention
Investigations following recent school shootings revealed that in all cases students had key pieces of information which may have assisted in the early detection and prevention of the incidents. Students need to be involved in bullying prevention efforts and to be educated in how to identify early warning signals and to appreciate the significance of what they may be observing.

Web Resources for Involving Youth

12 Things Schools Can Do to Stop School Violence
(National Crime Prevention Council)
www.ncpc.org/2schvio2.htm

National Campaign Against Youth Violence
Site includes a section on what youth can do to stop violence. www.noviolence.net

Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.)
Students learn about alternatives to violence and practice what they learn.   www.nationalsave.org

National Youth Leadership Council
NYLC is an advocate of service learning and youth service.   www.nylc.org

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center
Center helps young people find information about violence, including how to prevent it.
www.safeyouth.org/teens

Do Something.org
Do Something is a nationwide network of young people who know they can make a difference in their communities and take action to change the world around them. www.dosomething.org

Youth as Resources
Organization is a community-based program that provides small grants to young people to design and carry out service projects. www.yar.org

Youth Crime Watch
The YCW program empowers youth to take an active role in addressing the problems around them.
www.ycwa.org

Characteristics of the Effective Crisis Response Team Member:

You will want members of the crisis response team to have. . .

- A broad perspective on life
- Flexibility
- Familiarity with the specific characteristics of your school, its student body and its community
- Willingness to problem-solve cooperatively
- An ability to anticipate multiple consequences
- An ability to think clearly under stress
- Strong communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills

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Crisis Response Team Danger Signs

A Crisis Response Team is in trouble if it has . . .

No plan	Denial
Inflexible people	Outdated plan
No leader	Too many leaders
Delay in initial report	Unmanaged Media
"Lone ranger"	Rushed response
Turf battles	Rescue fantasy
Gossip, rumors	Secrets
"Hype"	

SAMPLE SCHOOL CRISIS TEAM ROSTER

Position	Name	e-mail	Work Phone	Home Phone	Cell Phone / Pager
Principal					
Ass't Principal*					
Team Coordinator					
Guidance Director**					
School Secretary					
School Psycholo-gist					
School Resource Officer					
School Social Worker					
School Nurse					
Teacher/ Counselor					
Teacher/ Counselor					
Custodian / Facilities					
Transpor-tation					
Food Service					
Others					

* Designated back-up person in the absence of the Principal
** Designated back-up person in the absence of the Crisis Response Team Coordinator.

THE FACTS: Violent Deaths in or Near Schools Are Rare

Source: U.S. Department of Education News Release, December 4, 2001
Based on a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice.

- While homicides and suicides in or around elementary and secondary schools are rare, such incidents may be preventable if schools and communities acquaint themselves with student behavior that can precede violent events - and take the proper and recommended steps to head off violent incidents.

- More than half of all violent incidents recorded in the study occurred after some type of potential signal came from a young person - such as a threat, note or journal entry.

- Students who committed violence were nearly seven times more likely than victims to have expressed suicidal thoughts or plans or actually attempted suicide.

- Link between bullying victimization and aggressive behavior is confirmed, with those bullied by their peers found to be at especially high risk for committing violence.

- Most violent events occurred during times of transition in schools, during morning arrival times, lunch, or at the end of the school day.

- Although the rate of school-associated events that resulted in violent deaths decreased significantly since 1992-93, the rate of events in which more than one victim was killed increased significantly.

- 253 victims died in 220 school-associated violent death events between 1994-99; among the victims, 68 percent were students, 7.1 percent were faculty or staff, 4.7 percent were family members of students and 11.9 percent were local residents.

- perpetrators were more likely than victims to have a history of criminal charges, be in a gang, associate with high-risk peers, be considered loners, or use alcohol or drugs;

The report was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and is available online at http://www.jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v286n21/abs/joc11149.html.

III. Developing an Effective Crisis Management Plan

Preparing for Crises: An Overview of Essential Activities

A school that is prepared before a crisis occurs will be much more likely to deal with students and staff effectively. ***An unprepared school is asking for chaos.*** In setting up a Crisis Management Plan, the following activities are important:

1. Decide who will be in charge during a crisis.

A crucial first step in crisis management planning is to decide who will be in charge during a crisis. Assign one person to provide leadership during emergency situations, to organize activities, and to disseminate information. Usually the person in charge is the principal or assistant principal.

Designate a substitute in the event that the designated person is unavailable at the time of the emergency. It is extremely important that all staff and students know who these people are. Identification badges can be helpful.

2. Establish the Crisis Response Team.

A second important step is to recruit members for the Crisis Response Team. Typically, the Crisis Response Team will consist of an administrator, nurse, psychologist, school social worker, teachers, counselors, and others with skills appropriate to the tasks to be performed, including school resource officers, when available. Sometimes forgotten, but important in crises are the school secretary/office manager, the head custodian, and bus drivers. Most, if not all, of you team members must be present full time at the school (or able to respond immediately to a phone call).

3. Develop clear and consistent policies and procedures.

It is absolutely critical to develop policies and supporting procedures that provide all staff with clear guidelines for tasks and responsibilities during crises and emergencies. This also ensures that all staff will respond consistently in each situation. It is important to include policies and procedures by which children will be released to their caregivers.

4. Provide training for the Crisis Response Team.

A suggested agenda for training the team is provided in Section V.

5. Establish law enforcement and other public safety liaisons.

This is typically established at the school division level utilizing a memorandum of understanding that sets forth channels of communication, roles and responsibilities.

6. Establish a media liaison and identify suitable facilities where reporters can work and news conferences can be held.

Many school districts have a community or public relations spokesperson to whom all media requests are referred. Know who this person is, and communicate with him/her to establish procedures for responding to the media in times of crisis.

7. Establish a working relationship with community mental health, health, public safety, and other resource groups.

To facilitate quick and collaborative responses, strong relationships with community agencies must be established prior to a crisis.

8. Set up a communications network.

Critical information needs to be communicated as quickly as possible to those in need. The network should utilize multiple methods from simple telephone trees to the electronic pager, depending on available technology.

9. Develop a plan for physical space management.

In a large-scale crisis, the school's main office and guidance areas cannot accommodate the influx of parents and media likely to occur. Crisis management planning should anticipate the potential space needs and designate space for media, public safety operations, parents, and student accounting. The physical plant will dictate choices; however, it is wise to take into account access to telephones, water, restrooms, food and drink. Staff to direct people and supervise these areas need to be identified in advance.

10. Develop necessary forms and information sheets.

Develop record-keeping forms to assist in the management of crisis situations. You may need to translate any materials for families into languages appropriate for your school community. A variety of sample forms and letters are included throughout this Resource Guide.

11. Develop a plan for emergency coverage of classes.

Teachers who will play significant roles in a crisis response need to be assured that their classrooms will be covered. Consider central office and the PTA as possible sources of assistance in coverage.

12. Establish a system of codes to alert staff.

Establish a system of codes to alert staff as to the nature of a crisis without unduly alarming the rest of the school.

13. Develop a collection of readings.

It is helpful for library services to develop a bibliography of books pertinent to crisis situations for students, staff, and parents. Such resources are valuable in assisting the school community to achieve a positive resolution.

14. Have school attorney review crisis response procedures and forms.

Adjust procedures to comply with any liability concerns. Remember to include procedures for documenting crisis activities.

15. Conduct practice "crisis alert" sessions with staff and students.

Prepare staff members for their responsibilities in a real crisis. Hold practice evacuations and lockdowns so that students will know what to expect. Through table-top simulations and other practice sessions, staff can become more proficient in responding to a variety of crises. Avoid sensationalized simulations, particularly any activities involving students.

16. Conduct training in the school crisis response procedures at least annually and make it part of any new employee orientation.

Training in school crisis response procedures is needed at least annually. Include crisis response procedures in new employee orientations. Additional in-service training sessions on crisis-related topics such as suicide, rape, and bullying are strongly recommended. A sample outline for in-service training is included in Section V. Training for Preparedness.

> **"The worst time to prepare for a crisis is after it has already occurred."**
>
> **- From Staying Safe at School: Survival Skills for Teachers**

Is Your School is Prepared for Crisis?

How are you doing on the crisis management front? Are you prepared if disaster strikes (or just hoping that it won't)?

Directions
Answer "true" or "false" to each of the following 25 items. Be honest in your responses.

_____ 1.   My school has a crisis plan.
_____ 2.   A crisis won't happen to me or occur on my campus.
_____ 3.   There are established guidelines for school personnel to follow for disruptive students and gang activity.
_____ 4.   There are established written guidelines and procedures for natural disasters, medical emergencies, and for mechanical breakdowns.
_____ 5.   In the last school year, there has been a major crisis in my school.
_____ 6.   In the last school year, there has been a major crisis in my district
_____ 7.   In the last school year, there has been a major crisis in a school in my state.
_____ 8.   Crises sometimes occur on or near school grounds.
_____ 9.   The neighborhood in which my school is located is near where drug deals frequently are made.
_____ 10   Visitors are screened, required to sign in, and are issued passes while on school grounds.
_____ 11.   Emergency supplies are kept on hand and up-to-date.
_____ 12.   There is a system in place to alert all staff members of a major crisis, which enacts a "stay-put ruling" until further notice from the principal.
_____ 13.   If a student handed any staff member a loaded gun or if a staff member found a gun on campus, staff members would know the proper procedures associated with gun safety.
_____ 14.   Parents can be contacted quickly in emergency situations.
_____ 15.   Vandalism occurs frequently to school property.
_____ 16.   Lockers are assigned to all students.
_____ 17.   My school adheres to a strict dress code and book bag policy (that is, clear or mesh book bags, no colors for gang identification, etc.
_____ 18.   There is an emergence of gangs in my community both for girls and boys.
_____ 19.   At least 20 percent of the students enrolled in my school have prior arrest records or are currently on probation.
_____ 20.   Students have been reporting that they are afraid to come to school because they fear personal harm.
_____ 21.   My school's truancy, suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates are increasing.
_____ 22.   My school employs one of the following: monitors, security guards, or resource officers.

_____ 23. Drugs and weapons are accessible to students within a 20-minute radius of the school.
_____ 24. My school has a trained crisis-response team.
_____ 25. More than 35 percent of the students enrolled in my school are from single-parent families or are enrolled in special education.

Scoring

Give yourself 1 point for each time you answered "true," and determine where you fit in the descriptions given below.

From 19 to 25 points: Experienced and realistic. Chances are you either experienced a crisis, or there has been one in your school district. You fully comprehend the need for crisis management planning. Guidelines are probably in place, but not necessarily in a well-defined plan. You have researched the areas of crisis planning and crisis teams. Keep working toward improving your existing policies and guidelines, for your crisis team, and train your team and staff. Evaluate all existing procedures using a comprehensive approach. This might be the time to bring in resource agencies to review the plan you already have and to consult with experts in the field.

Form 13 to 18 points: Thinking, but unprepared. Chances are you believe crises can occur on school grounds, but your school and district have been fortunate enough to have escaped one. You realize the need for crisis planning, and you have general policies about crisis management, but you don't have a comprehensive crisis management plan. Put together a crisis-planning task force and develop written policies and practices that will become part of your comprehensive plan. Constantly revise the plans you develop.

From 7 to 12 points: At-Risk. Chances are you have policies that deal with minor incidents, and your campus is typically quiet. Few if any fights occur; your major concerns are tardiness, truancy, and improving standardized test scores. Your staff members believe everything is all right and whatever happens will be handled. But you might as well play Russian roulette with a .38-caliber pistol. A crisis is likely to be just around the corner. Develop a plan, research other schools' plans, and formulate a crisis team. Read everything you can find on crisis management and attend as many seminars as possible.

From 0 to 6 points: The not-me syndrome. You probably everyone crises happen only in other schools, in other districts, or better yet, out of state. You are totally unprepared to deal with a major crisis. How can you? You don't believe a crisis can happen, so you have put no thought into what you would do if one occurred. But the time bomb is ticking. Get help immediately. Get a plan of any kind and review it. Develop one for your school without delay (as if your life and your students' lives depend on it).

*(Adapted from a survey developed by Melissa Caudle and published in **The Executive Educator**, November 1994.)*

Crisis Response Planning

Basic Crisis Response Procedures

Crisis response procedures guide staff in responding to the unfortunate but more frequently occurring crises such as the death of a student or a teacher by accident or illness and other events which can affect the school community for days but <u>do not</u> involve critical incidents such as school shootings. See Section IV for critical incident management procedures.

Crisis response procedures are intended to be time-limited, problem-focused interventions designed to determine the facts, disseminate accurate information, restore equilibrium, and support productive, appropriate responses. The crisis team uses crisis response procedures to help administrators:

- gather accurate information about the event;
- disseminate accurate information to staff, students, parents, and, if appropriate, the media;
- intervene directly with students most likely to be affected;
- increase the available supportive counseling for students and staff; and,
- guide students and staff to engage in productive, appropriate responses.

Getting Organized: Assessing Needs and Assigning Tasks

School crisis response teams must identify needs and match them with available resources.   As a starting point, it is important to --

<u>Identify Needs:</u>

- Areas of responsibility / tasks requiring attention in a crisis/emergency
- Physical space needs
- Communication needs

<u>Identify Resources:</u>

- Staff skills, particularly in responding to emergencies
- Physical space availability (including potential off-campus sites such as other schools, community centers, churches, etc.)
- Communications capabilities in the school

<u>Match Needs and Resources</u>

- Assign responsibilities for specific activities/tasks; designate back-up person(s) in the event of absences.
- Identify physical spaces for specific types of activities and assign staff to direct persons to the appropriate space and staff to supervise the spaces.
- Develop a communications plan with back-up strategies.

Sample inventories and rosters to assist in "getting organized" are provided on the following pages.

Procedures for General Crisis Intervention
Adapted from the Association of California School Administrators Procedures

Unanticipated events, such as suicides, school bus crashes, natural disasters, or multiple injuries or deaths, can quickly escalate into a schoolwide catastrophe if not dealt with immediately and effectively. Knowing what to do if such a crisis occurs will minimize the chaos, rumors, and the impact of the event on the other students. As a reminder, for the purposes of this guide, crisis is defined as:

A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death.

The following procedures are appropriate in the event of deaths or serious injuries to members of the school community. A General Crisis Intervention Checklist is provided at the end of this section to help you track the actions taken.

Immediately Following Notification of Crisis

The school administrator or designee should implement the following procedures when the school is notified of a near-death or fatal crisis situation:

Tell the person providing the information not to repeat it elsewhere in the school. Explain the school's need to verify the information and have any announcement of the event come from the designated school administrator. If there is concern regarding the likelihood of compliance with this request, it may be useful to keep the reporting person in the office (or have that person come into the office if he or she called the information) until appropriate steps can be taken.

Tell office staff members NOT to repeat or give out any information within or outside school until specifically instructed to do so. Have them direct all inquires to the administrator or designee until told otherwise. In school using student office help, it may be useful to request that only adults answer the school telephone for the remainder of the day.

In case of reporting student death, verify the reported incident by calling the police liaison or coroner. DO NOT DISTURB THE AFFECTED STUDENT'S FAMILY.

The timing of the notification of a crisis may alter the order of the initial steps taken. For example, if the school is notified in the morning, all procedures should be implemented on that day with emergency faculty meetings scheduled for lunch and after school. If notification is received at night or on the weekend, ask the person providing the information not to spread the information further until the situation is verified, and proceed with #3. Continue through the remaining general crisis intervention procedures, instructing office staff as appropriate (#2) the following school day.

Following Verification of Crisis response

The following actions are listed in a priority order. In actuality, several things will happen simultaneously. It is critical, however, that #1-10 occur BEFORE THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (#11) IS MADE.

Once verification of a crisis has occurred, the administrator and/or crisis response team designee(s) must attend to the following:

1. Notify the superintendent or other appropriate district administrator of the event. Have that person notify the media liaison if necessary.

2. Convene the Crisis Response Team. To not unnecessarily alarm others, use the coded message evaluated for these situations (e.g., "CRT members, please report to room 5," or "a CRT meeting will convene in room 5 in 10 minutes.")

3. Have an administrative assistant or other designee notify the school's social worker, psychologist, and/or counselors. If the affected student was in a special education or other special program, notify the appropriate program coordinator.

4. Assign Crisis Response Team members in the building to locate, gather, and inform closest friends of the deceased/injured and provide support. Pull this group together before the general announcement is made. If significant others are absent or out of the building, assure that a knowledgeable, supportive adult gives the news to them.

5. Prepare a formal statement for initial announcement to the entire school. Include minimum details and note that additional information will be forthcoming. Also prepare statements for telephone inquiries.

6. Decide on a time for an emergency staff meeting and announce it over the public address system. Invite designated outside professionals to join the meeting to help staff members process their own reactions to the situation. A format for the staff meeting is at the end of these Procedures.

7. Identify students, staff, and parents likely to be most affected by the news (e.g., due to their relationship to the deceased/injured, recent or anticipated family losses, personal history with similar crisis, recent confrontations with the affected student). These persons are targeted for additional support.

8. Determine if additional district/community resources are needed (or are needed to "stand by" (to effectively manage the crisis, and notify them if appropriate).

9. Assign team members in the building to:

   a. Provide grief support for students in designated building areas. Try to have more than one area available for this purpose. Have the adults on duty in these areas keep lists of students they see. Make sure the parents/guardians of these students are notified regarding the impact of the event on their children.
   b. Review and distribute guidelines to help teachers with classroom discussion.
   c. Stand in for any substitute teacher in the building or for any staff member unable or unwilling to deal with the situation during the announcement and subsequent discussion.
   d. Coordinate and greet all auxiliary support services staff members and take them to their assigned locations. Provide a sign-in/out sheet for them.
   e. Distribute the developed list of community resources to all classes.
   f. Assign a counselor, psychologist, social worker, or other designated staff member to follow a deceased student's class schedule for the remainder of the day if that will be helpful to teachers in those classes.

10. Station staff/student support members as planned prior to making the announcement.

11. Announce the crisis, preferably by delivering a typed statement to every classroom, or, if time is too limited, over the public address system. Include locations of in-building support.

Once the announcement is made, assigned staff members will perform the following:

1. Monitor grounds for students leaving the building without permission. Redirect them to support services. If unable to intercept, notify a family member expressing the school's concern.

2. Notify parents of students closest to the deceased/injured and ask them to pick up their children at the end of the school day. Implement the evacuation plan previously developed to plan for masses of parents who will pick up their children.

3. Notify bus drivers, especially those who drive the buses usually traveled in by the injured or deceased student, or who are experiencing the most severe shock.

4. Notify feeder schools regarding siblings or other students predicted to be strongly affected.

5. Provide support to faculty and other staff members in the lounge. Provide private support to individual staff members identified in #7.

6. Collect deceased student's belongings from his/her locker or other sites at the end of the day.

7. Officially withdraw a deceased student from the school attendance rolls.

The Staff Meeting

The school administrator and designated staff or community members must do the following at the first staff meeting during a school crisis:

1. Pass around a photograph of the deceased/injured student to familiarize staff with the student.

2. Review the facts of the crisis and dispel rumors.

3. Help staff members process their responses to the situation.

4. Describe the feelings that students may experience and suggest how teachers might handle specific situations.

5. Provide guidelines for helping students who are upset.

6. Encourage teachers to allow for expressions of grief, anger, etc., in the homeroom or class in which the announcement is received or in other classes throughout the day. Emphasize the acceptability/normalcy of a range of expressions. The guiding principle is to return to the normal routine as soon as possible within each class and within the school. The structure of routine provides security and comfort to all members of the school community.

7. Encourage staff to dispel rumors whenever possible and discourage any "glorification" of the event (especially in suicidal death).

8. Request staff to meet 30 minutes early the next morning to review procedures and debrief. If the crisis occurs on a Friday, call the meeting for the following Monday morning.

SAMPLE GENERAL CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

❑ Direct staff and others not to repeat information until verification is obtained.

❑ Notify superintendent.

❑ Convene Crisis Response Team and assign duties.

❑ Notify building support staff, such as counselors, psychologist, and social workers.

❑ Inform closest friends of the affected student and provide support.

❑ Prepare formal statement or announcement.

❑ Announce time and place of emergency staff meeting.

❑ Identify other/additional students, staff, and parents likely to be most affected by news.

❑ Assess need for additional community resources.

❑ Assign trained staff or community professionals to:

- Provide grief support to students;
- Review and distribute guidelines for classroom discussion to teachers;
- Stand in for absent/affected/substitute teacher; and
- Distribute lists of community resources.

❑ Make official announcement.

❑ Hold emergency staff meeting.

❑ As needed, assign team members and other staff to monitor grounds, notify parents, support staff, and feeder schools; provide support to staff; collect student belongings and withdraw student from school rolls.

SAMPLE CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed for use during a crisis response to monitor and document activities.

School _____

Date/Time Response Initiated _____

Description of Incident _____

_____
Crisis Response Team Members (list those present)

_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

First Hour Response:

Task	*Completed*	*By Whom*	*Notes*
Verify/gather additional information:	yes/no		
Notify other team members:	yes/no		
Notify police/emergency services: Contacted:	yes/no		
Notify Superintendent/designee:	yes/no		
Identify most affected students/staff:	yes/no		
Identify space(s) for crisis management activities:	yes/no		
Prepare public announcement(s):	yes/no		
Inform faculty/staff: Method:	yes/no		
Alter bell/schedule:	yes/no		
Inform students, as appropriate Which students?	yes/no Method(s)		
Establish Day 1 crisis support:	yes/no		
Notify Parents: Which Parents?	yes/no Method(s)		
School faculty meeting(s):	yes/no		
Conduct Day 1 debriefing:			
Plan for Day 2:	yes/no		

SAMPLE STAFF EMERGENCY SKILLS INVENTORY

A form such as the following can be used to inventory skills which may be helpful in a crisis:

Name:_____   Room #:_____

Please check any of the following in which you have expertise or training:

Emergency response:
- ❑ First aid
- ❑ CPR
- ❑ EMT
- ❑ Law Enforcement Source
- ❑ Other (Please specify)

- ❑ Fire Safety / Firefighting
- ❑ Search & Rescue
- ❑ Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

_____

Using information gathered in the inventory above, lists such as the one below can be developed:

STAFF WITH MEDICAL CARE SKILLS

Name	Room #	Intercom Extension	Training/Certification

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY

❑ Cellular Phone / Pager   Number(s) _____

❑ Bi/multilingual   Languages _____

❑ Sign Language

Using information gathered in the inventory above, lists such as the one below can be developed:

STAFF WITH CELL PHONES

Name	Room #	Intercom Extension	Cell Phone / Pager Numbers

BI-/MULTI-LINGUAL STAFF

Name	Room #	Intercom Extension	Languages

STAFF WITH SIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

Name	Room #	Intercom Extension	Comments

* Note that in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks and subsequent threats of attack, some school divisions are re-thinking prohibitions of students having cell phones at school. If student cell phones are allowed, a roster of numbers may be valuable, particularly in crises which arise during off-campus activities.

SAMPLE ROSTER OF STUDENTS/STAFF WHO NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN AN EMERGENCY

STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED ASSISTANCE

Name	Homeroom # Bus #	Description of Assistance Needed	Person(s) Assigned to Assist

STAFF MEMBERS WHO MAY NEED ASSISTANCE

Name	Room #	Description of Assistance Needed	Person(s) Assigned to Assist

Related Reading

Assisting People With Disabilities In A Disaster, **Federal Emergency Services Administration. Access at www.fema.gov**

SAMPLE STAFF ASSIGNMENT ROSTER

Assignment	Position/Name	Operations Site(s)
Decision/Control	Principal: Ass't Principal:	Main Office
Crisis Team	Coordinator: Back-up Coord:	Guidance Office
Communications / Notifications	Office Manager:	Main Office
Evacuation / Sheltering		Main Gymnasium; overflow: Cafeteria
Student Accounting / Release		Auditorium
Building Safety / Security	School Resource Officer:	Main Office / P. E. Office
Information (Telephone and "Walk-ins")	Guidance Secretary:	Library
Family Contact	Guidance staff: School Social Worker	Career Guidance Conference Room
Medical Response / Coordination	School nurse:	Health Suite
Support Counseling for Students / Staff	Guidance staff: School Psychologist	Guidance Offices

Planning for Off-Campus Activities

Off-campus activities, including field trips, are routine and important parts of the educational experience. Procedure and practices which are helpful in the event of an accident or other emergency include the following:

Use name tags / personal identification – note that these need to be worn on blouses or shirts rather than outer garments such as sweaters and coats which may be removed on long bus trips. Write-bracelets might be considered, particularly for younger children.

A route map and itinerary should be left at the school.

A roster of riders in each vehicle should be left at the school before departure - Students, staff, and chaperones should travel to and return from the activity site in the same vehicle.

Determine who has cell phones. It is desirable for someone in each vehicle to have a phone.

Bus Emergency Kit

- Cell phone or other emergency communications equipment.
- Rider roster (students, staff, chaperones)
- Signs to display bus numbers
- Route maps
- Area maps
- Pencils
- Paper
- Stick-on name tags
- First aid kit
- Emergency telephone numbers list
    - ✔ Division office (including pager numbers, if applicable)
    - ✔ Emergency medical services
    - ✔ Law enforcement (State Police)
    - ✔ Local hospital

SAMPLE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM REPORT FORMAT

Example of report to document Crisis Management; typically submitted to Superintendent/division-level designee:

Crises Response Team Report

Date of Report_____

School _____

Student'(s) Name(s):   Parent/guardian

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Description of incident (include date, time, place)

Immediate intervention by crisis response team

Follow-up procedures (with student, with student body [if appropriate}, with faculty)

Follow-up with parent(s)/guardian(s) of student(s) involved:

Case Manager: _____

Reviewed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

SAMPLE EVALUATION OF CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM INTERVENTION

The Crisis Response Team (CRT), consisting of both the school guidance staff and the area school student services staff, seeks your input to help us assess the effectiveness of the intervention during the recent crisis at your school. We would appreciate your taking a few minutes of your time to complete this form as soon as possible and return it to the Crisis Response Team Coordinator.

Please indicate with an "X" the response that most closely reflects your evaluation of the following:

1. Speed of CRT's response to the crisis:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Very delayed   Adequate   Very timely

2. Comprehensiveness of CRT's response:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Very limited   Adequate   Exceptional

3. Effectiveness of team's response in meeting students' needs:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Not helpful   Adequate   Very helpful

4. Assistance to teachers in the classroom

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Not supportive   Adequate   Very supportive

5. Quality of communication with the school faculty and staff:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Not informative   Adequate   Very explanatory

6. Support and guidance to individual teachers and staff:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Ineffectual   Adequate   Very empathetic

7. Assistance to the administrative staff:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Limited   Adequate   Very comprehensive

8. Amount of time allocated for intervention:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Insufficient   Adequate   Very sufficient

9. Support to families in need:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Lacking   Adequate   Outstanding

10. Communication of information to parents:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Minimal   Adequate   Thorough

11. Please circle the adjectives which best describe the students' reactions to the CRT's intervention:

satisfied   positive   angry   apathetic

negative   ambivalent   receptive   relieved

grateful   hostile

12. Please describe any significant reactions the students had to the CRT intervention that should be considered in future interventions.

13. Please comment on any aspects of the intervention you found particularly helpful or areas that you think should be modified.

School: _____

Signature (Optional): _____

Please return to Crisis Response Team Coordinator

(Source: Fairfax County Public Schools, VA)

Crises Requiring Limited School Involvement

In certain crisis situations, a schoolwide response would be excessive and unnecessarily impact students. In other instances, law enforcement investigation procedures may limit the school's ability to respond to the incident.

When suicide risk is present, or when attempted suicide has occurred, a limited response by trained school staff and/or the crisis response team should be all that is necessary to contain potential panic and reduce further risks. While these situations do not, of themselves, constitute a schoolwide crisis, inappropriate responses to these events can escalate to such proportions. In the case of crimes such as rape or sexual assault, a limited school-based response may be all that is needed in light of the law enforcement investigation and privacy issues.

Crises Occurring During Summer or Other School Breaks

If a school administrator or other crisis response team member is notified of a crisis during the summer (or when affected students are off-track if they attend year-round schools), the response usually will be one of limited school involvement. In that case, the following steps should be taken:

1. Institute the phone tree to disseminate information to Crisis Response Team members and request a meeting of all available members.

2. Identify close friends/staff most likely to be affected by the crisis. Keep the list and recheck it when school reconvenes.

3. Notify staff or families of students identified in #2 and recommend community resources for support.

4. Notify general faculty/staff by letter or telephone with appropriate information.

5. Schedule faculty meeting for an update the week before students return to school.

6. Be alert for repercussions among students and staff. When school reconvenes, check core group of friends and other at-risk students and staff, and institute appropriate support mechanisms and referral procedures.

SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR CRISIS RESPONSE DURING SCHOOL BREAKS

Crises that occur during school breaks or summer require fewer responses from the school. Use the following checklist to ensure no steps are forgotten.

❑   Institute the phone tree to inform Crisis Response Team members.

❑   Identify and make a list of students and staff members most likely to be affected.

❑   Notify staff members or families of students identified and recommend community resource people who can provide support.

❑   Notify remaining staff with appropriate information by letter or telephone.

❑   Schedule faculty meeting for an update before affected students return to school.

❑   When school reconvenes, monitor students and staff members previously identified.

❑   Make appropriate referrals for students or staff members who need additional help.

Keeping a Log

Recordkeeping during a crisis may appear to be of secondary importance. It is not. Having a record of information received, decisions made, and steps taken is important both during and after the crisis.

- During the crisis the log serves as a tool to share information among individuals or teams. As a crisis continues, staff members are likely to come and go; the log provides information critical to the smooth transfer to relief staff.

- During the crisis, the writer is forced to analyze what has occurred and to think more clearly. Such writing and clarifying issues assists in formulating and evaluating responses to crises.

After the crisis, particularly if liability issues arise, having a log is critically important in placing a given action in its context, providing explanations, and justifying decisions. Additional, a log is a useful tool for both post-incident debriefing and training.

Follow-up to Crisis Situations

The following information may be useful in the days and weeks following a crisis. Longer term follow-up procedures are also listed.

Day Two

❑ Gather faculty members and update them on any additional information/procedures. Allow staff opportunity to discuss feelings and reactions.

❑ In case of death, provide funeral/visitation information if affected family has given permission.

❑ Identify students in need of follow-up support and, in accordance with the school's crisis response plan, assign staff members to monitor vulnerable students.

> a. Coordinate any ongoing counseling support for students on campus;
> b. Announce ongoing support for students with place, time, and staff facilitator; and,
> c. Notify parents of affects students regarding community resources available to students and their families.

Immediately Following Resolution of the Crisis

❑ Convene crisis response team for debriefing as soon as possible:

> a. Discuss successes and problems and things to do differently next time.
> b. Amend crisis response procedures as necessary.

Long-term Follow-up and Evaluation

❑ Provide list of suggested readings to teachers, parents, and students.

❑ Write thank-you notes to out-of-building district and community resource people who provided (or are still providing) support during the crisis.

❑ Be alert on crisis anniversaries and holidays. Often students will experience "anniversary" grief reaction the following month or year on the date of the crisis, or when similar crises occur that remind them of the original crisis. Holidays, too, often are difficult for students who have experienced loss.

Crisis Response Team Post-Incident Debriefing

Post-incident debriefing is a process that reviews the operations at the incident and how they may be improved.

The Benefits

Benefits of post-incident debriefing include the following:

- A complete systematic account of the incident and an evaluation of the effectiveness of school procedures.

- Evaluation of response times.

- Evaluation of overall school, school-division, and community crisis management plans.

- Review of the effectiveness of practices and procedures.

The Process

The systematic process of debriefing should include a review of each of the following:

Initial understanding of crisis.
Was the information we had accurate? Complete? Were there misunderstandings? Confusion?

Initial strategies and tactics.
Did we take the correct first steps? What else should we have done? What would we do differently?

Results of strategies and tactics.
Did we achieve the intended results? Were there any unintended consequences of our actions? Improvements?

Obstacles encountered.
What? Who? Why?

What worked well and why.
What went well? Do we know why?

Recommendations for improvement.
What lessons did we learn?
Policies and/or procedures that need to be amended?
Additional training needed? Areas?
Communications?

Postvention

Postvention is supportive activity for adults and youth following a crisis. Such activities include debriefing sessions for those involved in the crisis and educational and support groups. The following is important to consider or keep in mind:

1. Plan appropriate follow-up activities as needed for students and for faculties as well. Crises can trigger problems in children who have heretofore not been identified as at-risk. Offering ongoing support may avert further tragedy.

2. Group meetings for bereaved students have often evolved from initial sessions and may be necessary for some students to recover.

3. Some mental health centers have sent professionals to schools for designated periods of time to conduct sessions with students identified as having particular difficulty. Such sessions are voluntary and require parent permission.

4. School librarians have compiled a useful list of reading material for young children on the subject of death. The list has been helpful to teachers and to parents who wish to discuss the loss of someone in the school community.

5. Arrange crisis debriefing for those persons involved in the management of the crisis. These can take the form of one or two group sessions where both crisis management and personal stress are discussed. Community mental health personnel can assist in this activity.

6. The school needs to follow up specifically on faculty or school staff directly involved in the crisis (these might be custodians, cafeteria personnel, secretaries, bus drivers, teachers, counselors, or administrators. All need to be involved in a relatively intense "debriefing session" if they were directly involved.

> **"School administrators must take a long-term view of dealing with a crisis . . . symptoms associated with trauma may not appear for weeks or months after the incident."**
>
> **- School Crisis Prevent and Response, National School Safety Center Resource Paper.**

Maintaining Preparedness

Changes — in personnel, policies, resources, and conditions — occur and make preparing for them a necessary part of crisis management in schools. Conducting drills and establishing a procedure for periodically reviewing and updating the Crisis Management Plan are two essential elements of maintaining preparedness.

SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF CRISIS PLAN

❑ Print updated crisis referral information in student handbook.

❑ Print update crisis referral information in faculty handbook.

❑ Confirm membership of Crisis Response Team, filling vacancies that have occurred.

❑ Review assigned roles and responsibilities of team members and revise, as needed.

❑ Review overall Crisis Response Plan and update in light of changes in conditions and/or resources at the school.

❑ Review Critical Incident Management procedures and update in light of changes in conditions and/or resources at the school.

❑ Update faculty of any changes in Crisis Response Team membership and procedures including identification/intervention referral, for crisis response, critical incident response, and postvention.

❑ Include review of Crisis Management Plan and related procedures in new staff orientation.

❑ Hold an all-faculty in-service on Crisis Management Plan annually and training in related topics on a more regular basis.

LOSS AND GRIEF

Children's Reaction to Trauma: What Adults Can Do to Help

Source: National Education Association and National Association of School Psychologists

Trauma can change the way children view their world. Assumptions about safety and security are now challenged. Children's reactions will depend upon the severity of the trauma, their personality, the way they cope with stress and the availability of support. It is common for children to regress both behaviorally and academically following a trauma.

> ***A good way to view the situation is that they are normal children in an abnormal circumstance.***

It is natural for children to first experience some sort of denial that the situation really happened. Fears, worries, or nightmares are common following a trauma. Sleep disturbances or eating difficulties may happen. Also children may begin to regress emotionally or act younger than their chronological age. They may become more clinging, unhappy, and needy of parental attention and comfort. Feelings of irritability, anger, sadness, or guilt may often emerge. Somatic complaints such as headaches, stomachaches, or sweating are not unusual. Children and adolescents may repeatedly relive the trauma by acting it out in play or dreams. Other students may seek to avoid all reminders of the trauma by withdrawing from others, refusing to discuss their feelings, or avoiding activities that remind them of the trauma. Some loss of interest in school, misbehavior, and poor concentration are other common reactions.

These symptoms may range from mild to severe. More severe symptoms may indicate that a child is experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder or depression. **The National Association of School Psychologists suggest that children process their emotions and reactions to a trauma within 24 hours to 36 hours following a crisis in order to prevent post-traumatic stress disorder.** The process is called a "group crisis intervention" or "debriefing."

Group Crisis Intervention: Aftercare to Process Trauma

A trained crisis responder or counselor generally facilitates the intervention or debriefing, asking the group who experienced the trauma together to sit in a circle. Following the model from NOVA (National Organization for Victims' Assistance, call 1-800-TRY-NOVA), the process begins with survivors thinking about and articulating their sensory perceptions during the trauma—what they saw, heard, tasted, smelled, and touched. They are then asked to think about and articulate the accompanying thoughts and emotions.

This helps survivors understand how unconscious associations are made with certain sights, sounds, smells, and experiences. In addition, by sharing aloud, individuals realize that others experienced similar reactions and emotions. It is a bonding exercise that provides feelings of safety and security. Finally, individuals in the group are asked to think about the future and imagine upcoming events. They then discuss how they will cope with future events and share their sources of strength and support systems.

The goal of the group crisis intervention is to provide three urgent needs.

• **Safety and security**—freedom from fears and terrors associated with the event; sensory perceptions and how thoughts and feelings are encoded.

• **Validation and ventilation**—need to tell the story of their experiences and understand the patterns of trauma reaction, and then recognize the human commonality of that pattern.

• **Predict and prepare**—facing the future and preparing for how they might cope. Identifying sources of strength.

The process helps survivors regain some sense of control or mastery over their lives. By providing a forum to help participants predict future events and their reactions to them, victims are better prepared to respond. The debriefing is critical in laying the foundation for a support system and provides comfort through sharing common feelings. It can ameliorate long-term adverse affects, add structure to a crisis, and help contain chaos and confusion.

Age-Specific Reactions to Loss

Age 6-10
Reactions observed primarily in play or artwork.
- Reduced attention span
- Changes in behavior
- Fantasizing event with savior at the end
- Mistrust of adults

Age 10-12 in girls, 12-14 in boys
Reactions reflected primarily in behavior which is less mature than characteristic behavior.
- Anger at unfairness
- Excitement of survival
- Attributes symbolic meaning to events (omens)
- Self-judgmental
- Psychosomatic illness

Age 13-18 in girls, 15-18 in boys
Reactions are similar to adult behaviors.
- Judgmental
- Mortality crisis
- Move to adult responsibilities to assume control
- Suspicious and guarded
- Difficult eating and sleeping
- Alcohol and other drug abuse
- More impulsive

SPECIAL ISSUES WITH ADOLESCENTS

- Allow regression and dependency
- Realize their lack of life experience in handling trauma
- Allow expression of feelings such as sorrow, hostility, and guilt
- Encourage discussion
- Allow for fluctuations in maturity level
- Watch for emergence of unfinished business or unresolved
  conflicts of the past
- Answer questions and provide factual information
- Correct distortions
- Avoid power struggle with adolescents
- Focus on strengths and constructive adaptive behaviors
- Identify and help resolve adolescents' sense of powerlessness

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES: CLASSROOM DISCUSSION WHEN A STUDENT DIES

1. Review the facts and dispel rumors.

2. Share your own reactions with the class and encourage students to express their reactions in a way appropriate for them, noting that people react in many ways and that is okay.

Possible discussion: What was it like for you when you first heard the news?

3. Inform students of locations for grief support; reassure students that any adult in the building is available for support.

Possible discussion: How can you students help each other through this?

4. Listen to what students have to say. It is important not to shut off discussion.

5. Talk with students about their concerns regarding "what to say" to other bereaved students and the family of the deceased. If applicable, share information about the deceased's culture (beliefs and ceremonies) which will help students understand and respond comfortably to the affected family.

Possible discussion question: If you were a member of (the student's) family, what do you think you would want at a time like this?

6. If the student died of an illness and it is appropriate to do so, discuss the illness. This is especially useful for younger children who may need to differentiate between the illness of the child who died and any medical problems of others the child knows.

7. If a suicide occurs, discuss facts and myths about suicide.

8. Allow students to discuss other losses they have experienced. Help them understand this loss often brings up past losses; this is a normal occurrence.

9. Encourage students to discuss their feelings with their parents/families. Keep in mind a "regular" day may be too hard for grieving students. Offer choices of activities.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES: POSSIBLE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AFTER A LOSS

Supporting others
- Discussing and preparing for funeral (what to expect, people's reactions, what to do, what to say)
- Encouraging mutual support
- Discussing ways to cope with traumatic situations
- Discussing the stages of grief
- Encouraging students to keep a journal of events and of their reactions, especially in an ongoing situation

Honoring the deceased *
- Writing a eulogy
- Writing stories about the victim
- Placing a collection box in school for notes to the family
- Designing a yearbook page commemorating the deceased
- Supporting a cause the deceased supported
- Collecting and displaying memorabilia
- Planting a tree, building a sculpture or painting a mural
- Starting a new school activity such as a SADD unit if a child was killed by a drunk driver

*These activities are not recommended in the case of suicide; see Suicide Do's and Don'ts.

Learning activities
- Writing a reaction paper
- Discussing historical precedents about issues related to crisis
- Writing a "where I was when it happened" report
- Investigating laws governing similar incidents
- Conducting a mock trial if laws were broken
- Debating controversial issues
- Read books about loss

Related Reading

"Cultural Perspectives on Trauma." <u>Community Response Team Training Manual </u>(2nd ed.) National Organization for Victim Assistance.

Handouts for Students

HELPING A GRIEVING FRIEND

First Steps
- If you learn of a grieving friend outside of school hours, call and go over as quickly as you can, if possible; or at least call.
- If you learn of a grieving friend during school, try to see the friend or send a note until you are able to talk.
- Your presence is all that is needed; if you wish to take a flower or anything meaningful, that's all right, too.
- Offer physical comfort.
- Don't be afraid to cry with your friend.
- Do not try to take away the pain from your grieving friend.

Communication
- Talk about the deceased person (grieving people really like telling stories about the deceased, "Do you remember the time. . ."
- No cliché statements (e.g., He's better off now since he now has no pain. "
- Don't be afraid you will upset your friend by asking or talking about the deceased; they are already very upset and should be.
- Just sitting with your friend may be all that's needed at times; don't be afraid of silence, the griever will most likely fill it talking about the deceased.
- Offer suggestions only when advice is asked.
- Listen, no matter what the topic.
- Do not tell the griever to feel better since there are other loved ones still alive.
- Call to check on the griever.

Attending a Visitation at the Funeral Home
or Attending a Funeral
- If you have not ever been to a funeral home or a funeral, expect to feel nervous.
- Go with a friend or ask a parent to accompany you, if you wish.
- If this is the first time you've seen the grieving friend, simply offer your condolences; just saying "I am so sorry about _____'s death" will open a conversation, or simply point out something special to you about the deceased.
- If the visitation or funeral is open casket, view the physical remains if you want; you do not have to.

Later Involvement
- Ask your grieving friend to go places, do activities together (it's all right if he/she initially resists).
- If invitations are turned down, keep inviting.
- Call to check on and talk to.
- Continue to talk about the deceased from time to time.

Developed by Ken Roach, School Psychologist, Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA..

WHEN A GRIEVING CLASSMATE RETURNS

First Words
- The classmate probably feels like he/she is from a different planet when returning to school.
- There is very little you can say wrong, so talk to the classmate.
- At least say, "hello," "welcome back," "I'm glad to see you," or something similar.
- The brave might even say: "I missed you," 'I'm so sorry to hear about your _____'s death."
- Even braver friends might even make statements like "It must be incredibly tough to have your _____ die."
- Another option: write a brief note.
- If your classmate cries, that is okay; you did not cause the grief and you can't make the person feel worse. Offer comfort and a tissue.

Helping the Classmate Adjust to the Class
- Offer to provide past notes.
- Offer to provide notes for comparison for the next week or so (your classmate's attention span will probably vary for several weeks).
- Give the classmate your phone number to call if having problems with homework.
- Ask your classmate if you can call to check on how homework is going.
- Ask the teacher if you can be the student's helper for a week.
- Offer to study together in person or over the phone; this might help with both motivation (grieving students frequently do not feel like doing school work) and with concentration.

Some Don'ts
- Don't shun. Speak to the student.
- No cliché statements (e.g., "I know how you feel" when nobody knows the unique relationship the classmate had with the deceased).
- Don't expect the person to snap back into the "old self".
- Don't be surprised if classmate seems unaffected by the loss, everybody has his/her own way of grieving.
- Don't be afraid to ask appropriate questions about the deceased, like "what did you and your _____ enjoy together?" (people never tire of talking about the people they grieve).
- Just because the classmate may seem to be adjusting to school again, don't assume the grieving has stopped, nor the need for comfort and friendship.

Developed by Ken Roach, School Psychologist, Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA..

HELPING GRIEVING PARENTS

This information should be helpful when interacting with the parents of a deceased friend. Always respect the wishes of grieving parents. These suggestions must fit the parents' needs and requests.

First Steps
- In the vast majority of cases the parents very much want to see the friends of their deceased child; they find it comforting.
- If you were a close friend of the deceased and you know the parents, then go visit them at their home.
- If you were a friend but had not met the parents (yet they know who you are), you might still visit the home.
- Other friends might wait until the visitation, such as held at a funeral home, or wait until the funeral.
- Regardless of the depth of your relationship with the parents, let them hear from you either by a call of a note.

Communication
- When you visit, do not worry about what to say; your presence is all that is needed. If you wish to take a flower or anything meaningful, that's all right, too.
- Don't be afraid you will upset the parents by asking or talking about the deceased; they are already upset.
- Don't be afraid to cry with the parents.
- Just sitting with the parents may be all that's needed at times; don't be afraid of silence, the parents will most likely fill the silence talking about their deceased child.
- Offer physical comfort.
- Listen, no matter what the topic.
- If you were a really close friend, the parents might be pleased for you to even visit the deceased friend's room.
- Ask what you can do for them; ask other relatives what you might do to help.
- Do not try to take away the pain from the grieving parents.
- No cliché statements (e.g., "he's better off now since he now has no pain").
- Talk about the deceased person (grieving people really like telling stories about the deceased, "do you remember the time...").
- Offer suggestions only when advice is asked.
- Do not tell the parents to feel better since there are other children and loved ones still alive.

Attending a Visitation at a Funeral Home or Attending a Funeral
- Expect to feel nervous when going to a funeral home or a funeral.
- Go with a friend or ask a parent to accompany you.
- If this is the first time you've seen the parents, simply offer your condolences; just say, "I am so sorry about _____'s death" probably will open a conversation; or maybe better, simply point out something special to you about the deceased.
- If the visitation or funeral is open casket, view the physical remains if you want; you do not have to.

Later Involvement
- After the funeral, continue to visit the parents; they probably will continue to want to see the friends of their deceased child.
- Call to check on and talk to.
- Continue to talk about their deceased child from time to time.

Developed by Ken Roach, School Psychologist, Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA.

WHEN YOUR TEACHER HAS SOMEONE DIE

Feelings
- Expect you and your classmates to experience different feelings, ranging from shock, sadness, vulnerability ("this could happen to me or someone I know"), to detach or nothing. All are okay.
- Some in your class may even laugh because they are nervous hearing or talking about grief and death. This may be their way of handling it, so don't become angry.
- Don't be surprised to catch yourself asking how this might affect you, your grades, or your relationship with your teacher.
- It's okay to think about other people who have died.

What To Do
- Talk with somebody (a friend or parent) about what has happened. This
- helps make the situation seem more real and keeps you from holding everything in.
- Try to get the courage to communicate with your teacher.

Communicating With Your Grieving Teacher
- Your teacher probably has a lot to do and cannot take calls from students.
- Send a card (buy or make).
- Write a note (and you don't have to have fancy stationery).
- Just write "I'm sorry" or "I'm thinking about you." or "I hope you are okay."
- Others may write more, even share their own experiences with grief. One student even composed a poem!
- There is nothing you can say that could make your grieving teacher feel worse.
- You are not going to remind a grieving person that he/she has had somebody die.
- Your teacher may never throw your card/note away, that's how important your communication will be. Your parents probably still have notes they've received.

Flowers and Donations
- They are not necessary.
- If you really want to do something, maybe you and some friends could pitch in together. Or maybe the class wants to do something as a group. It just takes one person to organize this.

What If You See Your Teacher Out in the Community
- If you see your teacher at the grocery store, a part of you will want to hide. How will that make your teacher feel?
- Speak to your teacher! You don't have to say much. A "How are you doing? or "We miss you at school." is enough.

What About Funerals and Memorial Services
- You have to respect the wishes of grieving people.
- Some teachers may welcome students. Others may not feel ready to cope with you yet. Some may feel uncomfortable with you around and their being "out of control." We have to understand and respect their needs.
- Also, 120 students take up a lot of space.
- Sometimes there is no chance to talk with the family. Other times you can't leave the building without doing so.
- If given the opportunity, speak. Again, just say "We're sorry." or something brief. Have your first several words chosen to lessen your fear.

Visitation at a Funeral Home
- If students are invited, go but take someone with you.
- Unless you have lots of experiences with visitation, you are going to
- feel scared and weird.
- If you go, speak simply as described above.

WHEN YOUR GRIEVING TEACHER RETURNS

Getting Ready
Plan some type of simple welcome back signal from the class to your grieving teacher.

Consider:
- a card signed by all the class;
- a small banner from "second period" or
- some flowers from a parent's yard, if in season; or,
- a small, inexpensive bouquet.

- If you have not communicated with your teacher, it's not too late to have a note ready just from you. It could be waiting in the teacher's mailbox on his/her return to school.
- Realize that the same teacher who left will return. Your teacher may initially seem a little distant or preoccupied but this should not last too long.
- Your teacher may have very poor concentration for a while after returning to work. He/she might repeat things. You may have to repeat your questions.
- Do not expect tests and homework to be returned as quickly as before; poor concentration, low motivation, and fatigue are typical grief reactions.

On the Big Day
- Expect to feel nervous. Your teacher will feel the same way.
- Your teacher also will probably feel like he/she is from a different planet.
- When you first see your teacher, at least say something simple, like, "Welcome back."
- The class also could even let a very brave volunteer speak for the class to formally welcome your teacher back. Or the volunteer could present the card.
- Show your good behavior; use your best listening skills. Help your teacher out; it will be a tough day. Smile!
- Some teachers will return quickly to teaching; others will discuss their grief. There is no single right way.

What If Your Teacher Cries?
- You do not have to anything but be patient.
- Your class could have a brave volunteer designated to offer comfort by saying something simple, such as, "We're supporting you."
- The student closest to the tissue box should take the box to the teacher. This shows the class cares and says it's okay to cry.
- At the end of class students might individually offer brief words of comfort or encouragement ("It's okay to get upset." or "I'm glad you are back.").
- Your teacher may be embarrassed by crying, but crying can be very helpful.
- If your teacher is having a really bad day, let your guidance counselor or other staff member know.

Developed by Ken Roach, School Psychologist, Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA..

Suicide

A school's general response to a suicide does not differ markedly from a response to any sudden death crisis, and the Procedures for General Crisis Intervention can appropriately be implemented. However, some issues exclusive to suicide require specific attention.

School administrators must allow students to grieve the loss of a peer without glorifying the method of death. Over emphasis of a suicide may be interpreted by vulnerable students as a glamorization of the suicidal act, which can assign legendary or idolized status to taking one's own life. Those who desire recognition may be encouraged to emulate the victim's behaviors.

The following "**DOs**" and "**DON'Ts**" will help school staff limit glamorization of suicide:

Do verify the facts, and treat the death as a suicide.

Do acknowledge the suicide as a tragic loss of life.

Do provide support for students profoundly affected by the death.

Do emphasize that no one is to blame for the suicide.

Do not dismiss school or encourage funeral attendance during school hours.

Do consider establishing up a fund for contributions to a local suicide prevention hotline or crisis center or to a national suicide prevention organization.

Do not organize school assemblies to honor the deceased student or dedicate the yearbook or yearbook pages, newspaper articles, proms, athletic events, or advertisements to the deceased individual.

Do not pay tribute to a suicidal act by planting trees, hanging engraved plaques, or holding other memorial activities.

A suicide in the school community can heighten the likelihood, in the subsequent weeks, of "copycat" suicide attempts and threats among those especially vulnerable to the effects of a suicide. To prevent further tragedies, students considered to be especially susceptible to depression/suicide must be carefully monitored and appropriate action taken if they are identified as high risk. These efforts require a limited, rather than schoolwide, response.

Related Reading

Suicide Prevention Guidelines **(1999) Virginia Board of Education. Available online at www.pen.k12.va.us**

Myths and Facts About Suicide

Myth: People who talk about suicide don't commit suicide.
Fact: Most people who commit suicide have given clues of some type of to one or more people. It is not safe to assume that someone talking about suicide will not attempt it; the majority of those who attempt suicide have stated their intent to someone.

Myth: Suicide happens without warning.
Fact: While explicit verbal warnings are not always given, there are clues ahead of time. The difficulty is that not everyone recognizes the signs and symptoms that would alert him/her to the possibility of suicide.

Myth: Suicidal people are fully intent on dying.
Fact: Rather than specifically wanting to die, students who attempt/commit suicide often do so simple because they have exhausted their coping skills and see no other options for relief from pain.

Myth: Once suicidal, a person is suicidal forever.
Fact: Preoccupation with suicidal thoughts is usually time-limited. Most young people who work through a suicidal crisis can go on to lead healthy lives.

Myth: Once a person attempts suicide, the humiliation and pain will prevent future attempts.
Fact: Eighty percent of persons who commit suicide have made at least one prior attempt (Hafen & Frandsen, 1986). It is critical that concerned adults and peers monitor a student who has attempted suicide for several months following the attempt. Those students who receive help for their suicidal risk before they made an attempt have a better prognosis than those who were intervened upon following an attempted suicide.

Myth: Suicide occurs more often among the wealthy.
Fact: Suicide knows no socioeconomic boundaries.

Myth: Suicidal behavior is inherited.
Fact: As with other patterns of behavior, suicide sometimes seems to run in families. However, suicide is not a genetic trait, so it is not inherited. What can appear to be a family trait of suicide may be because family members share a common emotional environment and often adopt similar methods of coping. In a family where someone has committed suicide, suicide may be viewed as acceptable in times of distress.

Myth: People who attempt or commit suicide are mentally ill/psychotic.
Fact: Many suicidal persons historically have had difficulty in working through problems. Other people who attempt or commit suicide choose it as an option when their previously successful means of coping are not effective, and they are unable to otherwise stop the pain they are experiencing. A history of mental illness does not increase the risk of suicide.

Myth: Talking about suicide can encourage a person to attempt it.
Fact: On the contrary, initiating a discussion of suicidal feelings may give a suicidal adolescent permission to talk about the pain she/he is experiencing and, by so doing, provide significant relief. It is highly unlikely that discussing suicide would influence a nonsuicidal person to become preoccupied with the idea.

Myth: People who attempt suicide just want attention.
Fact: Suicide should be considered a "cry for help." Persons overwhelmed by pain may be unable to let others know they need help, and suicide may seem the bet way to relieve the pain. Suicidal behavior may be a desperate move to reach out for much needed help.

Myth: Suicide is most likely to occur at night as well as over the holiday season.
Fact: Suicides can occur at any time, regardless of season, time of day or night, weather or holidays. Childhood and adolescent suicides, however, are most likely to occur in the spring, and second most likely to occur in the fall. Most childhood and adolescent suicides occur at home on weekends or between the hours of 3 p.m. and midnight (Eyeman, 1987; Indiana State Board of Health, 1985).

Myth: When depression lifts, there is no longer danger of suicide.
Fact: Although the existence of any form of depression increases the probability of suicide, this is a dangerous misconception. The lifting of depression often accompanies the development of a suicide plan and the final decision to commit suicide. If the improvement in mood is sudden and circumstances have not changed, the risk of suicide remains high. It is most useful to see suicidal behavior as a symptom not a disease. As such it may be caused by a variety of factors.

Source: Association of California School Administrators (1995)

"I think it is a mistake for a school to close the day following a suicide. In this way the students are left to their own devices at the precise time when they are most upset and overwhelmed by their feelings, and the opportunity for a rumor mill to greatly distort the actual events is inadvertently encouraged."

- Dr. David C. Clark, Executive Director,
Center for Suicide Research and Prevention

Suicidal Risk

Students at risk for suicide are increasingly common. Because suicide rarely happens without some warning to someone , staff and faculty need to take all comments about suicidal thoughts seriously, especially if details of a suicide plan are shared. It has been demonstrated that young people are often unlikely to share thoughts and feelings about suicide with adults; therefore school-based suicide prevention efforts should also focus on encouraging students to inform trusted adults when they hear other young people talk about suicide.

When a student is considered to be at risk for suicide, a parent or guardian must be contacted and involved from the onset. Any time the risk of suicide exists, the situation must be managed by an appropriately trained Crisis Response Team member or other trained district program, such as a school psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Under no circumstances should an untrained person attempt to assess the severity of suicidal risk; all assessment of threats, attempts, or other risk factors must be left to the appropriate professionals.

In cases of suicidal risk, the school should maintain a confidential record of actions taken. This will help assure that appropriate assessment, monitoring, and support are provided to the designated student and, should she or he commit a suicide later, such records will document the school's efforts to intervene and protect the student. For districts lacking appropriate risk assessment instruments, sample forms are usually available from reputable community resources. A monitoring form can be based on something as simple as the checklist on the following page. Again, such forms do not stand alone. Any assessment of suicidal risk should be undertaken by a qualified professional.

Document your monitoring of a student at risk for suicide by checking off the following appropriate actions taken.

For every high school of 2000 or more students in the United States, there will be at least one successful suicide and thirty of fifty attempts each year (National Institute of Mental Health, 1995).

Suicidal Risk Checklist

❑ School administrator notified.

❑ Parent/guardian notified or emergency contact notified.

❑ Mental health service provider (on site or external) notified and severity assessment requested.

❑ Other actions taken (specify):

Suicide Threats: DOs and DON'Ts

DO LISTEN to what the student is saying and take her/his suicidal threat seriously. Many times a student may be looking for just that assurance.

DO OBSERVE the student's nonverbal behavior. In children and adolescents, facial expressions, body language, and other concrete signs often are more telling than what the student says.

DO ACKNOWLEDGE the pain the student is expressing.

DO ASK whether the student is really thinking about suicide. If the answer is "yes," ask how she/he plans to do it and what steps have already been taken. This will convince the student of your attention and let you know how serious the threat is.

DO GET HELP by contacting an appropriate crisis response team member. Never attempt to handle a potential suicide by yourself.

DO GET EMOTIONAL SUPPORT for yourself as well. These circumstances can be quite upsetting. You need not go through this process alone.

DO STAY with the student. Take the student to a crisis response team member and stay with that student for a while. The student has placed trust in you , so you must help transfer that trust to the other person.

DON'T LEAVE the student alone for even a minute.

DON'T ACT SHOCKED or allow yourself to be sworn to secrecy.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE or brush aside a threat ("You won't really do it; you're not the type"), or try to shock or challenge the student ("Go ahead. Do it."). The student may already feel rejected and unnoticed, and you should not add to that burden

DON'T let the student convince you that the crisis is over. The most dangerous time is precisely when the person seems to be feeling better. Sometimes, after a suicide method has been selected, the student may appear happy and relaxed. You should, therefore, stay involved until you get help.

DON'T take too much upon yourself. Your responsibility to the student in a crisis is limited to listening, being supportive, and getting her/him to a trained professional. Under no circumstances should you attempt to counsel the student.

Source: Association of California School Administrators (1995)

Virginia Suicide Prevention Guidelines

The following are excerpts from the Virginia Suicide Prevention Guidelines (1999). The complete document may be accessed at www.pen.k12.va.us.

Guidelines for Obtaining and Conducting an In-School Assessment and Follow-up

Below are listed the guidelines and suggestions for school personnel to follow when suspecting that a student is at risk of attempting suicide.

A. Reporting Concerns

All licensed school professionals bear a responsibility to identify and report students at risk of suicide. Some school personnel, such as building administrators and teachers, do not by training and job responsibility possess the skills to professionally assess imminent danger with regard to suicidal ideation. The latter are expected to report any direct communication from a student that indicates a suicidal intent to licensed school professionals, who by training and job responsibility, possess the skills to professionally assess imminent danger. Details for making the report under various conditions (e.g., school counselor is on sick leave) should be included in each school division's crisis management plan.

B. Conducting an Assessment

Licensed school professionals who by training and job-related duties are responsible for assessing imminent risk of danger related to suicidal ideation include school counselors, school nurses (Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses), school psychologists, and school social workers.

C. Following-up

The school personnel identified above who are responsible for conducting this assessment are also responsible, subsequent to this assessment, for contacting parents or the Department of Social Services (DSS) as deemed appropriate within the parameters of this statute.

Guidelines for Notifying Concerned Parties

Below are listed specific guidelines and suggestions for notifying parents or social services when a child is in imminent danger of suicide.

A. Identification of Available and Appropriate Community Services for Suicidal Children

Each school division will develop and maintain a current local and state-level resource list of public and private assessment and treatment facilities appropriate for school-age children. Such facilities provide the services of licensed mental health professionals who are qualified to assess and provide appropriate crisis intervention for school-age children with suicidal intent. This list should include information on location, contact procedures, costs, and other considerations that facilitate the referral process for parents and departments of social services.

B. *Parent Notification Timelines and Procedures*

If a student is determined to be at imminent risk of suicide, then the licensed school professional who completed the assessment shall immediately call at least one of the student's parents/ guardians. When contacting the student's parent or guardian, the licensed school professional should:

- provide his or her name and position in the school,
- state that in his or her professional judgment the student is at imminent risk of suicide,
- assure the parent or guardian that the student is currently safe,
- state the legal requirement for the call, citing the § 22.1-272.1. of the Code of Virginia,
- ask the parent whether he or she is aware of the student's mental state,
- ask the parent whether he or she wishes to obtain or has obtained mental counseling for the student,
- provide names of community counseling resources if appropriate,
- offer to facilitate the referral, and
- determine the parent's intent to seek appropriate services for the student.

Parents who opt for supportive interventions outside the professional mental health arena, such as religious-based interventions, should provide at a minimum a plan that will include a safety plan and an issues-based intervention procedure that will keep the child safe and will address the precipitant issues.

The licensed school professional shall document the phone call or attempted phone call to the parent or guardian. The documentation shall include the time and date of the call, the parent's or guardian's response, and any required follow-up.

If the licensed school professional is unable to contact either parent or guardian by the end of the school day, then he or she shall follow the school's crisis management plan for seeking treatment for a student without the parent's authorization.

A student who is at imminent risk of suicide must remain under adult supervision until a parent or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the student's safety.

C. *Issues of Abuse and Neglect*

If a student indicates that parental abuse or neglect is the reason for contemplating suicide, parental contact should not be made. The licensed school professional should notify immediately the local or state social services agency. The notifying person must emphasize that immediate action is necessary to
protect the child from harm.

If parental contact is made and, in the course of this contact, relevant issues of abuse or neglect are discovered (e.g., a parent acknowledges the child's suicidal intent but indicates no intent to act for the well-being of the child), the licensed school professional should notify immediately the local or state social services agency. The notifying person must emphasize the fact that immediate action is necessary to protect the child from harm.

D. Department of Social Services Notification Timelines and Procedures

If the licensed school professional suspects or has knowledge of abuse or neglect, he/she immediately contacts the Virginia Department of Social Services(Child Protective Services Hotline) or Child Protective Services unit of the local department of social services and makes an oral or written report. The child must be kept safe and secure until the local department of social services, child protective services worker, or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the safety of the child. The report should include the following:

- his or her name and position in the school,
- the name and identifying information of the child, and
- the legal requirement for the call, citing § 22.1-272.1 of the Code of Virginia.
- Other appropriate information regarding the abuse or neglect issues – such information may include:
    - specifics as to reported abusive behavior or incidents,
    - significant recent changes in school attendance, performance, or behavior,
    - when such changes were noted and their duration, and
    - an offer to facilitate an appropriate mental health referral.

An important consideration regarding this aspect of the process is that a high degree of cooperation and responsiveness is called for on the part of schools, departments of social services, and treatment providers such as community mental health centers. The investigation of alleged abuse or neglect is often an involved process. Child protective service workers will be called upon to begin the process of investigation with a child who is very likely to be difficult to interview. It is expected that emergency treatment will be sought jointly by school and social services personnel prior to the completion of such an investigation. Local school systems are encouraged to coordinate with departments of social services and treatment providers on the integration of this process into their school's crisis management plan.

Upon completion of this process, the licensed school professional shall document the phone call to the department of social services. The documentation shall include the time and date of the call, the individual contacted, the response plan agreed upon, and any required follow-up. A student who is at imminent risk of suicide should remain under adult supervision until an authorized individual accepts responsibility for the safety of the student.

Guidelines for Following Up an Intervention

After a child who was in imminent danger of suicide has received an appropriate crisis intervention plan, regardless of the process by which this was accomplished, it is appropriate for the licensed school professional who initiated the referral to make a one- to two-week follow-up contact to ascertain the current status of the child and facilitate any in-school support that may be required.

Suicide Clusters

The Centers for Disease Control define a suicide cluster as a group of suicides or suicide attempts, or both, that occur closer together in time and space than would normally be expected in a given community. Many think that clusters occur through a process of "contagion" in which suicides that occur later in the cluster were influenced by the earlier suicides.

Some groups of suicides may occur at approximately the same time simply by chance. However, even these pseudo-clusters can create a crisis atmosphere in the communities in which they occur and cause intense concern on the part of parents, students, school officials and others. (See "Perceived Crisis" in the Quick Guide to Crises).

School Strategies for Preventing "Contagion" After a Suicide

- Pay to close attention to those most affected by the suicide: those closest to the victim or who may have witnessed the suicide scene, students at high risk, and those who have been suicidal in the past
- Offer additional supportive services and provide opportunities for those affected to talk.
- Make sure everyone is alert to any talk of suicide and takes any threat seriously.
- Make sure all staff members know who to immediately contact if they become aware of a risk of suicide.
- Students should be encouraged to tell any adult in the school if they are concerned about another student.
- Track and make contact on a daily basis with students at risk.

Media Coverage and Suicide "Contagion"

Media coverage of suicides has been demonstrated to contribute to suicide "contagion." The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) has prepared guidelines for media in their coverage of suicide; these guidelines have been endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These guidelines may be accessed at www.suicidology.org/mediaguidelines.htm

Aspects of news coverage that can promote suicide contagion include the following:

- Presenting simplistic explanations for suicide.
- Engaging in repetitive, ongoing, or excessive reporting of suicide in the news.
- Providing sensational coverage of suicide.
- Reporting "how-to" description of suicide.
- Presenting suicide as a tool for accomplishing certain ends.
- Glorifying suicide or persons who commit suicide.
- Focusing on the suicide completer's positive characteristics.

Suicide Attempts

When a school becomes aware that a student or staff member attempted suicide, the school must protect that person's right to privacy. Should a parent or other family member notify the school about a student's suicide attempt, the family should be referred to appropriate community agencies for support services. Staff response should be focused on quelling the spread of rumors and minimizing the fears of fellow students and staff. As opposed to convening a Crisis Response Team meeting and alerting the student body, any services provided to the person who attempted suicide must be kept confidential and coordinated with outside service providers, such as a suicide crisis counselor or hospital emergency team.

A suicide attempt becomes a crisis to be managed by school staff only when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging.
- Students witness police action or emergency services response.
- A group of the attempt survivor's friends are profoundly affected by the suicide attempt.

When one or more of the above conditions exists, the following should be implemented:

- Tell the person providing the information about the suicide attempt not to repeat it elsewhere in the school.

- If school office staff members heard the report, tell them NOT to repeat or give out any information within or outside school unless they are specifically told to do so.

- Have the Crisis Response Team member closest to the survivor talk to the most profoundly affected friends and determine the type support they need.

- Provide space in the school for the identified peers to receive support services. Provide necessary passes to release these students from class to receive services.

Did You Know?
- Suicide is a serious, preventable health problem throughout Virginia
- On average, one Virginia teenager dies each week and two Virginia adults die each day from suicide
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young Virginians aged 10 - 24.
- Suicide is also a serious problem among older Virginians, especially those 65 and older
- Many suicide deaths can be prevented.

SAMPLE SUICIDE ATTEMPT CHECKLIST

❑ School involvement regarding the incident is due to:

    __ rumors and myths that are widespread and damaging
    __ law enforcement action/emergency services witnessed by students
    __ survivor's friends requesting intervention

❑ Information providers/recipients enjoined not to repeat information elsewhere.

❑ Steps taken to protect the survivor's right to privacy.

❑ Action taken to quell rumors.

❑ Crisis Response Team member closest to the survivor met with friends to determine support needed.

❑ Space provided on site for identified peers to receive support services.

❑ School reentry procedures followed.

❑ All records related to the incident and services provided stored in confidential file.

Warning Signs Of Suicide

There is no typical suicide victim. It happens to young and old, rich and poor. Fortunately, there are some common warning signs which, when acted upon, can save lives. Here are some signs to look for:

A person might be suicidal if she or he:

- Talks about suicide.
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Shows drastic changes in behavior
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, school.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and making final arrangements
- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Has had recent severe losses
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Loses interest in their personal appearance
- Increases their use of alcohol or other drugs

School Reentry for a Student Who Has Attempted Suicide

Efforts to respond to suicide attempts and other traumas should be focused on making the student's return to school a comfortable one. Because families exposed to a suicide attempt experience considerable guilt and fear, they are more likely to disclose that a daughter or son has made an attempt if they know the school has a helpful, nonthreatening manner of dealing with suicide.

Because a student who attempted suicide often is at greater risk for a suicide in the months following the crisis, it is extremely important to closely monitor his or her reentry into school and to maintain close contact with parents and mental health professionals working with that student.

Assuming the student will be absent from one to four weeks after a suicide attempt and possibly hospitalized in a treatment facility, schools should follow these steps:

- Obtain a written release of information for signed by the parents. This makes it possible for confidential information to be shared between school personnel and treatment providers.

- Ask the returning student if he/she has special requests about what is said and done by the school.

- Inform the student's teachers regarding the number of probable days of absence.

- Instruct teachers to provide the students with assignments to be completed, if appropriate.

- Maintain contact with the student to keep him/her informed of the latest developments in the school, if appropriate. If the student has a previous, positive relationship with a trusted staff member, provide support to that staff member in maintaining ongoing contact with the student.

- Seek recommendations for aftercare from the student's therapist. If the student has been hospitalized, a Crisis Response Team member should attend the discharge meeting at the hospital.

- The Crisis Response Team member should convey relevant non-confidential information to appropriate school staff regarding the aftercare plan.

- Once the student returns to school, a Crisis Response Team member should maintain regular contact with him/her.

- The school should maintain contact with the parents provide progress reports and other appropriate information, and be kept informed of any changes in the aftercare plan.

IV. Critical Incident Management

Critical Incident Procedures

Critical incident procedures focus narrowly on situations which involve imminent danger to life and limb. Such procedures emphasize a coordinated interagency response to preserve and protect life. Sound policy requires the development, *in advance of a critical incident*, of **interagency agreements** that specify channels of communication, types of services, and areas of responsibility. Such interagency agreements typically are established with public safety (i.e., police, sheriff's office, fire department, emergency services) and mental health agencies (i.e., Community Services Board).

Partnerships with Community Public Safety Agencies

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is a nationally recognized emergency operations plan that is adapted for large critical incidents where multi-agency response is required. Schools can use SEMS and the Incident Command System (ICS) as the organizing structure for their Critical Incident Response Plan. SEMS facilitates priority-setting, interagency cooperation and the efficient flow of resources and information.

SEMS establishes common standards of organization, procedures, communications and terminology among agencies. This unified command structure functions under the direction of the ICS and all agencies and organizations work together under this system to more effectively respond to any major critical incident. By adopting and utilizing this system, schools will respond to any critical incident with better communication and coordination with other responding agencies and organizations.

Related Reading

<u>Safer Schools: Strategies for Educators and Law Enforcement to Prevent Violence</u>. **Access at http://www.ncpc.org/eduleo.htm**

Incident Command System (ICS)

Source: Crisis Response Box: Partnering for Safe Schools. (May 2000). California Attorney General's Office and California Department of Education

The Incident Command System provides a unified command in a multi-responder emergency in which all agencies which have a jurisdictional responsibility for multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to the process of:

- determining the overall objectives to gain control of the incident,
- selecting strategies to achieve their objectives,
- planning jointly for tactical activities,
- integrating appropriate tactical operations, and
- making maximum use of all assigned resources.

As a rule of thumb, if a crime is involved, the police take over the scene; most everything else is controlled by the fire company or local emergency response system. School staff need to be familiar with their local jurisdiction's Incident Command System to avoid any confusion when responding to a critical incident. It is a good idea to identify in advance a liaison officer for the school; this is typically the principal. There is a clear chain of command among law enforcement, emergency personnel of the fire department and paramedics. It is very important for school leaders to meet them ahead of time and learn about their ICS so that the school can become a functioning member of the ICS team.

ICS Functions

The ICS provides overall direction and sets priorities for an emergency. In operation, the ICS has five functions: Management, planning/intelligence, operations, logistics and finance/administration. Under each of these functions, schools should pre-assign specific individuals, based on their job roles and responsibilities, to assist in the management of school site operations.

Management - Overall policy direction.

School Principal/Administrator: The critical incident and/or disaster determines who will be the Incident Command Officer. Until the arrival of the Incident Command Officer, the site administrator is in charge. The site administrator is most often the principal unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Public Information Officer: The administrator may authorize and designate a trusted, well trained individual to coordinate information being released to the press and make public announcements.

Safety Officer: This person serves as a liaison officer. He/she is the point of contact for assisting and cooperating with agency representatives.

Planning/Intelligence - Gather and assess information.

Instructional Staff: Teachers, librarians, computer center managers and teachers' aides can perform this function. These individuals must be able to use communication equipment, gather information in a timely manner and weigh it for significance and important decisions.

Operations - Implement priorities established by the Incident Command Officer.

First Aid Coordinator: Knows where all supplies are located, oversees first aid prior to paramedics' arrival, coordinates with paramedics. This person is usually the school nurse.

Search and Accountability Coordinator: Accounts for everyone on site as quickly as possible. This person must have access to attendance records, visitor sign-in sheets, emergency data cards of students and any other information that will assist in accounting for the school population. This person works closely with the Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator.

Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator: Oversees location where students assemble, attends to their needs when providing shelter, oversees how parents receive students and the process for releasing students. This person works closely with the Search and Accountability Coordinator.

Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator: Knows layout of building and grounds, location of shut-off valves and utility lines and is familiar with school blueprints.

Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator: Oversees distribution of food, water and essential supplies throughout critical incident.

Traffic Safety Coordinator: Oversees transportation system.

Bilingual Translator: Assists in communication in schools which have a significant number of students and parents who speak English as a second language.

Logistics - Obtain resources to support the operations.

Instructional, Facilities and Administrative Staff: Facility, staff or administrators who provide support and resource systems for the operations functions.

Finance/Administration - Track all costs associated with the operations.

Administrative and Clerical Staff: Individuals responsible for purchasing, paying bills and balancing books are best suited to this function, which involves planning, purchasing emergency supplies and tracking costs following an emergency.

Debriefing
At the concluding of any critical incident, whether large or small, it is important to conduct a debriefing session. This is often referred to as a critique. All participating agency representatives should meet to discuss what went right and how the system could be improved. It is critical that all agencies participate in this process in order to refine and improve the plan as needed.

Components of the Crisis Response Box

Source: Crisis Response Box: Partnering for Safe Schools. (May 2000) California Attorney General's Office and California Department of Education

A Crisis Response Box contains more than directions to use in the event of an emergency. The following components make possible a thorough school and community response to a crisis:

Aerial Photos of Campus
An aerial perspective of the campus and the surrounding area is very helpful to all agencies involved in a critical incident, including police, fire and paramedic personnel. Your local municipality may be able to provide you with an aerial photo of your school and surrounding campus.

Map
Crisis response planners need to review the traffic patterns and intersections that will be affected in a major crisis. Through this process, you can identify locations where parents or guardians can retrieve their children after an incident and determine traffic safety issues your school and law enforcement will have to consider when directing youth to safe areas. Keep as many as 20 copies of the map available, preferably laminated, for emergency personnel. Establish an emergency traffic plan capable of protecting emergency response routes and accommodating traffic and parking needs for parents, students and the media. The map should illustrate these planned routes as well as:

- The streets surrounding the school
- Intersections near the school
- Vacant lots near the school
- Location of major utilities

Campus Layout
It is important to maintain current, accurate blueprints, classroom layouts and floor plans of the building and grounds, including information about main leads for water, gas, electricity, cable, telephone, alarm and sprinkler systems, hazardous materials location, elevators and entrances. This information is extremely helpful, especially during a "shelter-in-place" situation when students are safely locked in a classroom. Information should be available on the layout of the building, including room numbers and whether or not there is a phone, cable television, e-mail, computers or cell phones in the classroom. On the campus layout diagram, it is also helpful to highlight areas that could pose a possible threat, e.g., the chemistry laboratory, biology laboratory or any welding and wood shop areas that could also become a haven for weapons. It is also helpful to show the location of the fire alarm turn-off, sprinkler system turn-off, utility shut-off valves, cable television shut-off and first aid supply boxes. These items can be color-coded on the campus layout.

Blueprint of School Buildings

Architectural blueprints of the school building(s) are important to a SWAT team, and provide additional -- and more detailed – information than the simple classroom layout diagram. This information may be critical, especially in the event of a bomb threat. The plant manager for the school site should be the custodian for the blueprints. Grounds and maintenance staff of the school should be familiar with these blueprints and their location.

Teacher/Employee Roster

A teacher/employee roster should go into the Crisis Response Box. If you can enter teachers' names on the classroom layout diagram, all the better. If not, be sure to match up each teachers' name with his or her classroom and identify whether or not each teacher has a cell or land phone. This roster should identify any teacher/employee with special medical needs (e.g., diabetes) who will require medications during a prolonged period and those with a disability who may require assistance in an evacuation. Someone in the front office should be assigned to pick up the visitor/volunteer/substitute teacher list in the event of a critical incident.

Keys

The Crisis Response Box should also contain a master key and an extra set of keys for those rooms for which a master key cannot be used. The keys must be clearly tagged. Consider placing the keys in a locked container within the box to assure added security in case the box should end up in the wrong hands. Some schools have found it advantageous to keep the master key in a Knox Box (rapid entry system) outside of the school. This is a secured metal box that can easily be accessed by a code or a key without having to enter the building. This can prove especially helpful when it is not safe to enter the school. Further information on a Knox Box can be obtained from your local fire department.

Fire Alarm Turn-off Procedures

One of the lessons learned from Columbine was to make it easier to turn off the alarm. The loud alarm made it very difficult for responders to hear directions. It took considerable time before someone who knew how to turn it off was able to do so. School officials learned that you can't assume that the person who knows how to turn off the alarm will be logistically able to do so. If that person is inside the building, he or she might not be able to get to the shut-off valve; if that person is outside, it is possible that he or she might not be able to safely re-enter the school. As a result, a number of people need to know how to shut off the alarm. Providing such information on where shut-off valves are located in the building and the procedures for shut-off in the box could prove vital. In addition, though somewhat costly, some schools have installed a secure alarm shut-off system outside the school that can control the fire alarm and sprinklers.

Sprinkler System Turn-off Procedures

Sprinkler systems may go on during an emergency. During the incident at Columbine, no one was readily available who knew how to immediately turn off the sprinkler system. As a result, hallways quickly filled with water, making it difficult to escape. In some places, the water reached dangerous levels in proximity to the electrical outlets -- water reaching such outlets could have caused many more injuries and possibly additional deaths. At least two people

need to be trained and assigned responsibility for turning off the sprinkler system. As backup, the Crisis Response Box needs to provide information on where shut-off valves are located in the building and the necessary procedures for shut-off.

Utility Shut-off Valves
Shut-off and access points of all utilities -- gas, electric and water – need to be clearly identified and their locations listed so they can be quickly shut off in a crisis. If there is not a fire, the water should be shut off immediately to prevent flooding from the sprinkler system. Unless open electric or gas lines pose an immediate threat to life, the decision on whether to shut off these lines should be made by the Incident Command Officer.

Gas Line and Utility Line Layout
Include a diagram that shows where gas and other utility lines are located throughout the campus.

Cable Television Satellite Feed Shut-off
If your school has a satellite feed for a cable television system, you should also provide directions on how to shut down that feed. Several of the police officers involved in nationally televised shootings recommend that the cable television feed be shut off so that the perpetrators on the inside will not be able to view the whereabouts of the SWAT team by turning into live coverage of the scene on the outside. On the other hand, in a natural disaster, the television system can be helpful (if working) to provide those who are sheltered-in-place with up-to-date information.

Student Photos
Photos can help in the essential task of identifying students injured, missing or killed. In addition, in those instances where the perpetrators' identities are known while the crisis is still in progress, photos can be of great assistance to law enforcement and SWAT teams who must enter the building and make split-second decisions amidst a sea of student faces. If you do not have access to copies of student photo IDs, the most recent school yearbook (along with the additional photos of the newest incoming class) will suffice. Be sure to include photos of teachers and staff, as well. You might want to consider asking vendors who take pictures for your school to digitalize them and make them available on a CD, which you can then include in the box. Many law enforcement agencies bring laptops to the crime scene and can thereby gain instant access to such photos, print them out, make copies and distribute them to other officers.

Incident Command System (ICS) Key Responders' Phone Numbers
Names and phone numbers for all team participants involved in coordinating with your local emergency response system should be in the box. These people would include the coordinators for the Incident Command System (ICS), Public Information, First Aid, Traffic Safety, Student Assembly and Release and Grounds and Maintenance. Also, include the names and phone numbers of other key staff members, such as the Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator; the bilingual translator (if appropriate for your school); and any additional numbers for potential additional positions you have identified. Be sure to place these phone numbers on several cards so that more than one person can begin calling them.

Designated Command Post and Staging Areas
Police chiefs involved in several of the recent school shootings recommend that schools and law enforcement plan for three distinct staging areas, in addition to the Command Post for the Incident Command Officer. Among other things, separate staging areas will prevent the press from converging upon parents or parents from converging upon police. The areas should be:

▪ A Staging Area for law enforcement and emergency personnel;
▪ A Media Staging Area away from the school, at a location that can accommodate a large number of vehicles; and
▪ A Parent Center, located away from the Command Post, where parents can retrieve their children

Maps of all command posts, listing each corresponding main phone number, should be included in the Crisis Response Box. Be aware that these command posts may change based upon the circumstances. It is also recommended that the command posts have telecommunications capability wherever possible.

Emergency Resource List
A list of individuals and organizations who assist in a emergency should be prepared on a separate sheet of paper and placed in the box so that the person assigned can immediately begin to make phone calls to those on the list. Your local emergency management agency can recommend agencies you should call during an emergency. Please note that any volunteers you enlist for a critical incident response should be pre-screened and that the volunteers on your list must receive training, prior to becoming a responsible member of your emergency response team. Some agency phone numbers to have on hand include:

▪ American Red Cross
▪ Clergy, including Law Enforcement
▪ Counselors (A cadre of trained crisis intervention counselors should be identified to provide mental health Afirst aid@during and following the crisis.)
▪ Commonwealth Attorneys Victim/Witness Assistance Center
▪ Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) (local office)
▪ Local emergency radio channels
▪ National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
▪ Parent representative(s) (The parent representatives should be trained to help fellow parents receive information, answer questions and maintain calm at the Parent Center. Fellow parents can be an excellent source of support.)

Evacuation Sites
Maps with evacuation and alternate evacuation routes should be stored in the Crisis Response Box and should also be posted on classroom doors. It is where students will likely be headed (following the route) in order to identify them, or, if they are missing, to determine where along the route they might be found. Be aware, however, that during a shooting spree the best-laid plans for evacuation are also under siege. All classrooms at Columbine, for example, had evacuation plans, but with two students shooting throughout the entire school, evacuating the building was itself a dangerous venture. In the Jonesboro, Arkansas incident, two boys opened fire after students evacuated the building during a false fire

alarm. Other factors may affect an Incident Command Officer to alter the usual evacuation route. In a chemical spill, for instance, how the winds are blowing will determine where to evacuate. Thus, it is important to have at least two predetermined evacuation sites identified.

Student Disposition Forms and Emergency Data Cards
Imagine hundreds of parents descending upon your school to retrieve their children while you are trying to account for each student's whereabouts. You will need forms to keep track of who has been released and to whom B parents, relatives, emergency personnel or the hospital. It is suggested that a set of release forms (enough to cover the entire school census) be stored in the Crisis Response Box and be given to the Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator of your ICS team.

Additionally, if possible, it is helpful to have a set of your student emergency data cards placed in the box. Having all the data stored on a disk is the most convenient way of containing the information. Optimally, the cards and disks should be updated every three months to remain current as possible. Emergency information can also be stored, updated and retrieved electronically either from the school office or a remote site, such as the office.

Student Attendance Roster
One of the most difficult challenges you will face in such a crisis is accounting for all of your students. Teachers should have readily accessible, when on duty, a listing of all pupils in their charge. Teachers should also be instructed to take their classroom attendance list with them during an evacuation. A system should be developed to retrieve these lists from teachers when it is safe and feasible. Someone should be assigned to place that day's attendance roster into the box each morning. This information is shared with the Search and Rescue Coordinator who, in turn, coordinates with the Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator and the School Incident Command Coordinator.

Inventory of Staff Resources
Survey your certificated and classified staff to build an inventory of special skills and training they possess. Document your findings and place the list in the box under the ICS heading. For instance, experience can include prior medical and triage experience, bilingual capabilities, grief counseling background, search and rescue training, hostage negotiations, first aid/CPR certification and volunteer firefighter or reserve police officer/deputy. These skills could prove to be very helpful in a critical incident.

List of Students With Special Needs
A list should also be included in the box that identifies those students who need special assistance (e.g., blind and deaf students and those who need wheelchairs, crutches and braces) and/or with special medical needs (e.g., diabetes) that will require medications during a prolonged period and those with a disability that will require assistance in an evacuation.

First Aid Supplies Location
Sets of first aid supplies should be located throughout the campus. Storage locations should be included in the box. Include the locations on one of the building layout maps in the box.

Emergency First Aid Supplies
Though the following list of supplies are not contained in the box, the FBI Academy recommends that schools be aware of information from the Lessons Learned Summit regarding first aid supplies. In the Jonesboro, Arkansas shooting, large bins of first aid supplies were readily accessible on the school grounds and are credited with saving two children's lives and preventing others from going into shock. These supplies were situated in and out of the school building in anticipation of an earthquake because the school property is located on a fault line. The accessibility of these supplies proved to be lifesaving. It will not do anyone any good if these supplies are locked away deep within the confines of the school. Some schools have stationed first aid boxes in every classroom with basic emergency aid instructions to treat various injuries. Although not designed for first aid purposes, duct tape is very useful and versatile and should be available in every classroom. Whichever methods you deem will work best for your school, it is advisable to make sure that ample supplies are readily accessible throughout your complex and that all teachers are aware of their location.

Factors That Increase the Likelihood of Trauma

According to the National Organization for Victim Assistance, certain factors increase the likelihood of trauma. Among these factors are the following:

- incidents within closely knit communities;
- incidents with multiple eye witnesses;
- when the victims have a special significance;
- when a community is exposed to carnage or misery;
- incidents that call for numerous rescue workers; and,
- Incidents that attract a great deal of media attention

SAMPLE SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT INFORMATION INVENTORY

ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Map ▪ Streets surrounding school ▪ Intersections near school ▪ Vacant lots		
Campus Layout ▪ Room numbers, phone numbers, computers, e-mail, cable TV ▪ Threat areas, e.g., chemistry and biology labs, shops		
Blueprint of School Building(s)		
Teacher/Employee Roster ▪ Room and cell phone numbers ▪ Staff directory ▪ Copy of employee photo Identifies		
Keys Clearly marked and master keys		
Fire Alarm Turn-off Procedures How and where located		
Sprinkler System Turn-off Procedures How and where located		
Utility Shut-off Valves ▪ Electric ▪ Gas ▪ Water ▪ Where and how to shut off		
Gas Line and Utility Lines Lay-Out		
First Aid Supplies Location and how to access		
Designated Command Posts ▪ Law Enforcement, Emergency Personnel ▪ Receiving Area for Parents ▪ Receiving Area for Press		
Cable Television Shut-off Identify where and how		
Student Photos ▪ Copy of photo IDs of students ▪ Current yearbook		

ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Incident Command System (ICS) **Key Responder List (names and all phone numbers)** ▪ ICS School Incident Coordinator ▪ Public Information Coordinator ▪ First Aid Coordinator ▪ Search and Accountability Coordinator ▪ Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator ▪ Traffic Safety Coordinator ▪ Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator ▪ Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator ▪ Bilingual Translator ▪ Inventory of Staff Resources		
Emergency Resource List List of agencies and phone numbers to assists during an emergency such as: ▪ Victim Assistance Response Team ▪ American Red Cross ▪ Federal Aviation Authority ▪ Counselors ▪ Emergency Radio Channels		
Evacuation Sites Maps with routes to at least two evacuation sites; should also be posted in classrooms.		
Disposition Forms Set of forms for parents/guardians/hospitals/ER personnel to sign when a student has been released to them.		
Student Attendance Roster ▪ Roster should be entered in the box daily ▪ Teachers bring their classroom attendance sheet to evacuation site		
List of Students With Special Needs ▪ List of students with special medical needs requiring medications ▪ List of students with a disability requiring assistance in an evacuation ▪ Student emergency card data		
Additional Items to be Included Depending Upon Local Decisions: **SOS Communication System from Classrooms to Emergency Personnel** (e.g., color-coded posters to alert outside help about life-threatening injuries, non life-threatening injuries or no injuries)		
Incident Command System Organization Chart Reflecting roles and responsibilities of school officials and local emergency personnel		

First Steps: Pre-Incident Identification/Intervention

Pre-incident identification/intervention procedures provide a *systematic process for identifying, assessing, and intervening* with students who may be suicidal or constitute a potential threat to others.

These procedures are designed to prevent or *reduce risk* to the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff.

Policy establishing such procedures involves

- training of students and staff to recognize warning signs of risk;
- immediate, mandatory reporting;
- qualified assessment of risk; and,
- expedited access to school and/or community resources for appropriate intervention.

Attending to the "Small Stuff"

A proactive approach to school safety begins by targeting "put-downs," "trash talk," and bullying.

Although high-profile issues and incidents such as shootings, drugs, weapons, and gangs receive the most media attention, experience has taught that attention to the "small stuff" yields the greatest dividends in improving school climate and preventing more serious incidents.

It is strongly recommended that schools develop policies and programs which specifically prohibit/discourage "put-downs," insults, bullying, and other forms of intimidation. By addressing these frequently overlooked and underestimated forms of disruptive behavior, schools may prevent escalation to assaults and shootings.

Breaking the "Code of Silence"

Investigations of recent school shootings and of hate crime incidents have revealed that indicators of serious problems were present and were either ignored or minimized so that their significance was not recognized. Breaking the "code of silence" requires the following:

1. Education to increase awareness of early warning signs of trouble. Increasing awareness involves educational activities with students, staff, and parents to teach them how to identify early warning signals and to appreciate the significance of what they may be observing.

2. Establishing highly accessible mechanisms for reporting concerns to ensure a timely risk assessment and appropriate interventions. This often involves establishing policies which require immediate reporting of concerns, then having a risk assessment process in place.

Threat Assessment

From ***The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment***. (2000). Federal Bureau of Investigation. Download at http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/school2.pdf

What is a Threat?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be spoken, written, or symbolic -- for example, motioning with one's hands as though shooting at another person. Threat assessment rests on two critical principles: first, that all threats and all threateners are not equal; second, that most threateners are unlikely to carry out their threat. However, all threats must be taken seriously and evaluated.
In NCAVC's experience, most threats are made anonymously or under a false name. Because threat assessment relies heavily on evaluating the threatener's background, personality, lifestyle, and resources, identifying the threatener is necessary for an informed assessment to be made -- and also so criminal charges can be brought if the threat is serious enough to warrant prosecution. If the threatener's identity cannot be determined, the response will have to be based on an assessment of the threat alone. That assessment may change if the threatener is eventually identified: a threat that was considered low risk may be rated as more serious if new information suggests the threatener is dangerous, or conversely, an assessment of high risk may be scaled down if the threatener is identified and found not to have the intent, ability, means, or motive to carry out the threat.

Motivation
Threats are made for a variety of reasons. A threat may be a warning signal, a reaction to fear of punishment or some other anxiety, or a demand for attention. It may be intended to taunt; to intimidate; to assert power or control; to punish; to manipulate or coerce; to frighten; to terrorize; to compel someone to do

something; to strike back for an injury, injustice or slight; to disrupt someone's or some institution's life; to test authority, or to protect oneself. The emotions that underlie a threat can be love; hate; fear; rage; or desire for attention, revenge, excitement, or recognition.

Motivation can never be known with complete certainty, but to the extent possible, understanding motive is a key element in evaluating a threat. A threat will reflect the threatener's mental and emotional state at the time the threat was made, but it is important to remember that a state of mind can be temporarily but strongly influenced by alcohol or drugs, or a precipitating incident such as a romantic breakup, failing grades, or conflict with a parent. After a person has absorbed an emotional setback and calmed down, or when the effects of alcohol or drugs have worn off, his motivation to act on a violent threat may also have diminished.

Signposts
In general, people do not switch instantly from nonviolence to violence. Nonviolent people do not "snap" or decide on the spur of the moment to meet a problem by using violence. Instead, the path toward violence is an evolutionary one, with signposts along the way. A threat is one observable behavior; others may be brooding about frustration or disappointment, fantasies of destruction or revenge, in conversations, writings, drawings, and other actions.

Types of Threats

Threats can be classed in four categories: *direct, indirect, veiled*, or *conditional.*

A direct threat identifies a specific act against a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner: "I am going to place a bomb in the school's gym."

An indirect threat tends to be vague, unclear, and ambiguous. The plan, the intended victim, the motivation, and other aspects of the threat are masked or equivocal: "If I wanted to, I could kill everyone at this school!" While violence is implied, the threat is phrased tentatively -- "If I wanted to" -- and suggests that a violent act COULD occur, not that it WILL occur.

A veiled threat is one that strongly implies but does not explicitly threaten violence. "We would be better off without you around anymore" clearly hints at a possible violent act, but leaves it to the potential victim to interpret the message and give a definite meaning to the threat.

A conditional threat is the type of threat often seen in extortion cases. It warns that a violent act will happen unless certain demands or terms are met: "If you don't pay me one million dollars, I will place a bomb in the school."

Factors in Threat Assessment

Specific, plausible details are a critical factor in evaluating a threat. Details can include the identity of the victim or victims; the reason for making the threat; the means, weapon, and method by which it is to be carried out; the date, time, and place where the threatened act will occur; and concrete information about plans or preparations that have already been made. Specific details can indicate that substantial thought, planning, and preparatory steps have already been taken, suggesting a higher risk that the threatener will follow through on his threat. Similarly, a lack of detail suggests the threatener may not have thought through all of the contingencies, has not actually taken steps to carry out the threat, and may not seriously intend violence but is "blowing off steam" over some frustration or seeking to frighten or intimidate a particular victim or disrupt a school's events or routine. Details that are specific but not logical or plausible may indicate a less serious threat. For example, a high school student writes that he intends to detonate hundreds of pounds of plutonium in the school's auditorium the following day at lunch time. The threat is detailed, stating a specific time, place, and weapon. But the details are unpersuasive. Plutonium is almost impossible to obtain, legally or on the black market. It is expensive, hard to transport, and very dangerous to handle, and a complex high explosive detonation is required to set off a nuclear reaction. No high school student is likely to have any plutonium at all, much less hundreds of pounds, nor would he have the knowledge or complex equipment to detonate it. A threat this unrealistic is obviously unlikely to be carried out.

The emotional content of a threat can be an important clue to the threatener's mental state. Emotions are conveyed by melodramatic words and unusual punctuation -- "I hate you!!!!!" "You have ruined my life!!!!" "May God have mercy on your soul!!!!" -- or in excited, incoherent passages that may refer to God or other religious beings or deliver an ultimatum. Though emotionally charged threats can tell the assessor something about the temperament of the threatener, they are not a measure of danger. They may sound frightening, but no correlation has been established between the emotional intensity in a threat and the risk that it will be carried out.

Precipitating stressors are incidents, circumstances, reactions, or situations which can trigger a threat. The precipitating event may seem insignificant and have no direct relevance to the threat, but nonetheless becomes a catalyst. For example, a student has a fight with his mother before going to school. The argument may have been a minor one over an issue that had nothing to do with school, but it sets off an emotional chain reaction leading the student to threaten another student at school that day -- possibly something he has thought about in the past. The impact of a precipitating event will obviously depend on ***"pre-disposing factors"***:

'underlying personality traits, characteristics, and temperament that predispose an adolescent to fantasize about violence or act violently. Accordingly, information about a temporary "trigger" must be considered together with broader information about these underlying factors, such as a student's vulnerability to loss and depression.'

Levels of Risk

Low Level of Threat: A threat which poses a minimal risk to the victim and public safety.
- Threat is vague and indirect.
- Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail.
- Threat lacks realism.
- Content of the threat suggests person is unlikely to carry it out.

Medium Level of Threat: A threat which could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic.
- Threat is more direct and more concrete than a low level threat.
- Wording in the threat suggests that the threatener has given some thought to how the act will be carried out.
- There may be a general indication of a possible place and time (though these signs still fall well short of a detailed plan).
- There is no strong indication that the threatener has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some veiled reference or ambiguous or inconclusive evidence pointing to that possibility -- an allusion to a book or movie that shows the planning of a violent act, or a vague, general statement about the availability of weapons.
- There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: "I'm serious!" or "I really mean this!"

High Level of Threat: A threat that appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.
- Threat is direct, specific and plausible.
- Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying it out, for example, statements indicating that the threatener has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had the victim under surveillance.

Example: ***"At eight o'clock tomorrow morning, I intend to shoot the principal. That's when he is in the office by himself. I have a 9mm. Believe me, I know what I am doing. I am sick and tired of the way he runs this school."*** This threat is direct, specific as to the victim, motivation, weapon, place, and time, and indicates that the threatener knows his target's schedule and has made preparations to act on the threat.

NCAVC's experience in analyzing a wide range of threatening communications suggests that in general, the more direct and detailed a threat is, the more serious the risk of its being acted on. A threat that is assessed as high level will almost always require immediate law enforcement intervention. In some cases, the distinction between the levels of threat may not be as obvious, and there will be overlap between the categories. Generally, obtaining additional information about, either the threat or the threatener will help in clarifying any confusion. What is important is that schools be able to recognize and act on the most serious threats, and then address all other threats appropriately and in a standardized and timely fashion.

Students Who May Represent a Potential but Not Immediate Threat to Others

Immediate Steps

In the event that a staff member has reason to believe that a student may represent a potential threat to others, the actions listed below are to be taken. <u>These steps apply only to situations in which the student is presenting no immediate threat</u>.

1. Take all comments about doing harm to others seriously, especially if details about how the acts are to be carried out are shared.

2. Immediately report concerns to an administrator.

3. **Under no circumstances should an untrained person attempt to assess the severity of the risk;** all assessment of threats, attempts, or other risk factors must be left to the appropriate professionals.

NOTE: It is important to avoid inappropriately labeling or stigmatizing individual students because they appear to fit a specific profile or set of early warning indicators. It's okay to be worried about a child, but it's not okay to overreact and jump to conclusions.

Early Warning Signs

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. However, educators and parents' -- sometimes students -- can recognize certain early warning signs. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. A good rule of thumb is to **assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.**

We know from research that most children who become violent toward self or others feel rejected and psychologically victimized. In most cases, children exhibit aggressive behavior early in life and, if not provided support, will continue a progressive developmental pattern toward severe aggression or violence. However, research also shows that when children have a positive, meaningful connection to an adult – whether it be at home, in school, or in the community -- the potential for violence is reduced significantly.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate – and potentially harmful – to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the early warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. School communities must ensure that staff and students only use the early warning signs for identification and referral purposes – only trained professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are presented with the following qualifications: They are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. The early warning signs include:

- **Social withdrawal.** In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.

- **Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone.** Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.

- **Excessive feelings of rejection.** In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of expressing their emotional distress in negative ways including violence. Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.

- **Being a victim of violence.** Children who are victims of violence, including physical or sexual abuse, in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.

- **Feelings of being picked on and persecuted.** The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings, some children may vent them in inappropriate ways, including possible aggression or violence.

- **Low school interest and poor academic performance.** Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations, such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated, acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.

- **Expression of violence in writings and drawings.** Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an over representation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the

guidance of a qualified professional, such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist, to determine its meaning.

- **Uncontrolled anger.** Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.

- **Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors.** Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.

- **History of discipline problems.** Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.

- **Past history of violent and aggressive behavior.** Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on than are children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.

- **Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes.** All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance – when coupled with other factors – may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.

- **Drug use and alcohol use**. Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.

- **Affiliation with gangs.** Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors, including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students, cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups -- those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them -- may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are

common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.

- **Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms.** Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restricting, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.

- **Serious threats of violence.** Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

Source: *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* (1998), pp. 8-11.

Key Resource on Student Threat Assessment –
Comprehensive procedures for schools to use in responding to student threats of violence

Virginia Youth Violence Project
Curry School of Education
405 Emmet Street
Charlottesville, VA 22903-2495
(804) 924-8929
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/curry/centers/youthvio/

Dangerous / Threatening Students

Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self and/or to others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, staff, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one staff member, as well as to the child's family.

Imminent warning signs may include:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

When warning signs indicate that danger is imminent, safety must always be the first and foremost consideration. Action must be taken immediately. Immediate intervention by school authorities and law enforcement officers is needed when a child:

- Has presented a detailed plan (time, place, method) to harm or kill others -- particularly if the child has a history of aggression or has attempted to carry out threats in the past.

- Is carrying a weapon, particularly a firearm, and has threatened to use it.

In situations where students present other threatening behaviors, parents should be informed of the concerns immediately. School communities also have the responsibility to seek assistance from appropriate agencies, such as child and family services and community mental health.

Source: *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* (1998), p.11.

School Threat Assessment Response Protocol

Purpose

The purpose this protocol is to provide a mechanism to assure that threats of violence in a school environment are addressed, whenever possible, before they occur. The protocol is intended to identify credible threats of violence and address those threats and the Individual making the threat before the threat is carried out. *NOTE: This protocol is applicable during any school-sponsored event or function, whether the event or function be on school property or not.*

Procedures

The following procedure is separated into several sections in order to reflect those instances where a threatened act of violence may be received by specific individuals.

1.   Any student, upon receiving information that a person is threatening to commit an act of violence, shall:
   - Assume threat is serious;
   - Immediately report the threat to a parent, guardian, school staff, administrator   or law enforcement officer;
   - Be available and cooperative in providing a statement of information, with the understanding that the information source (student) will remain anonymous to the greatest extent possible.

2.   Any parent or guardian, upon receiving information that a person is threatening to commit an act of violence, shall:
   - Assume threat is serious;
   - Immediately report the threat to a school staff member, school administrator or law enforcement officer;
   - Be available and cooperative in providing a statement of information, with the understanding that the information source (parent or guardian) will remain anonymous to the greatest extent possible.

3.   Any school staff member, upon receiving information that a person is threatening to commit an act of violence, shall:
   - Assume threat is serious;
   - Immediately report the threat to a school administrator their designee;
   - Be available and cooperative in providing a statement of information, with the understanding that the information source (the staff member) will remain anonymous to the greatest extent possible.

4.   Any school administrator, upon receiving information that a person is threatening to commit an act of violence, shall:

- Assume threat is serious;
- Cause the student making the threat, if said student is on campus, to be immediately removed from the classroom and segregated into a secured area pending further investigation.
- Immediately notify the designated law enforcement officer assigned to the school and provide the team member with complete information regarding the information received;
- Require the school staff member, if this is the source of the information, to provide immediate written statements regarding the information received.

5.   The designated law enforcement officer, upon receiving information that a person is threatening to commit an act of violence, shall:
- Assume threat is serious;
- Immediately conduct an assessment interview of the subject making the threat. The assessment interview will include at least one administrator .

NOTE: The primary purpose of the interview is to engage in an assessment of the available information, in an attempt to determine the veracity of the threat, in order to decide what level of follow-up action is needed and appropriate.

6.   Once the assessment is complete, the law enforcement officer and administrator shall convene privately to discuss the threat and consider options for follow-up action:
   A. If it is agreed the threat is credible:
      1. The law enforcement officer shall immediately consult with the local Commonwealth's Attorney.
      2. The school administrator shall take administrative action in accordance with School Board policy.
      3. The student's parents or guardian shall be notified in accordance with School Board policy.

   B. If it is agreed that the threat is not credible, the school administrator shall assume responsibility to institute any further action deemed necessary.

7.   Once the situation has been assessed and action, the school principal assumes the responsibility for reporting to the superintendent.

Follow-Up Considerations
Periodically, meetings need to be held to discuss specific issues and incidences. The meeting is necessary to determine the effectiveness of this protocol. Changes should be made as needed, based on actual experiences.

Source**:** *Model School Crisis Plan* (1999), Virginia Board of Education

School Shootings

Immediate Response

Immediate responses in the event of a school shooting include:

1. Immediately call 911 and notify the school resource officer, if one assigned to the school; relay additional information on the location of the perpetrator and number of victims as it becomes available.
2. Determine if the perpetrator is still on premises.
3. Institute lockdown and/or evacuation procedures.
4. Attempt to determine the number of victims and identify witnesses.
5. Implement necessary first aid procedures through trained staff, school nurse, nurse's aide, physical education department, and/or athletic trainer. Direct rescue personnel to injured and give any required assistance. Designate staff member to accompany victim(s) in ambulance.

Lockdown or Evacuation?

When a dangerous person or condition exists on or near the school, the primary objective is to protect students from the danger. Many site-specific factors including the types of communication systems available, layout of the school and types of construction are taken into consideration in determining whether lockdown or evacuation should occur. For example, a classroom with block walls and a locked steel door provides a more secure environment than a portable classroom. Because of these site-specific variables, schools should establish internal procedures unique to their location.

Options include a full-school lockdown, a full evacuation, or a lockdown of designated areas and evacuation of other areas. In general, if the perpetrator remains at large in the building or his/her location is unknown, lockdown is likely to be the better choice. If some students are not secured in a locked location and are in the path of danger, then an evacuation of those students may be required.

Sample lockdown and evacuation procedures are included on pages 105 and 107.

 Related Reading

Coping with Crisis: Lessons Learned (1999) by Scott Poland and Jami S. McCormick. Longmont, CO: Sophis West.

The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment (2000) by Federal Bureau of Investigation. May be downloaded from http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/school2.pdf

Securing and Restoring the Crime Scene

Immediately following the incident, law enforcement officials will assume responsibility for the scene. However, before they arrive, it is important that anything that might be considered physical evidence be preserved "as is." Do not allow anyone to pick up items such as the weapon, ammunition casings, or items belonging to the perpetrator. When law enforcement officials take over, be prepared to assist them in keeping students, staff, and any other onlookers out of the area of the crime scene. Be aware that investigation of the crime scene can take from one to several days.

When law enforcement investigators have completed their work and released the area for clean-up, the worst damage should be cleaned, the area generally straightened, and gather victims' possessions. Experience with school shootings has taught that it is better to not immediately remove all signs of the incident such as patching bullet holes because students, parents, and others in the community will want to see the scene in the days immediately following the incident and such evidence helps people understand what happened. According to the National Education Association's Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit, "There is a strong and significant psychological connection to death sites that needs to run its full course and should never be ignored or discounted."

The First Day Back at School

The first day back at school following a crisis is a very important benchmark in the healing process. Re-entry into the school structure and routine represents progress a "new normal." However, because emotions are close to the surface and triggers that spark disturbing memories are often unpredictable, the thought of going back to school can be daunting. Careful preparation in paving the way to the first day back is critical.

Careful attention should be paid to the needs of all members of the school community. Immediate needs on the first day back often include:

- managing the media,
- providing meaningful expressions to mark the occasion,
- ensuring safety and security,
- activating a responsive referral system for students and staff who need additional support, and
- allowing opportunity for classroom discussion of what has occurred before transitioning into the school routine and returning to established curriculum.

All staff should meet prior to school to review the day's schedule and procedures. "Safe rooms" should be made available for students and staff who may need to seek quiet or guidance. High risk students should not be released to empty homes during or after school. Students should be encouraged to be aware of one another and to walk a student to an adult if they need help.

"Copycats"

Threats to safety of any kind should first be immediately reported to school administration and law enforcement. It should be made clear that making threats is against the law and carries severe consequences. Threats should not be taken lightly but should provoke the full force of law with vigorous efforts to track down the source.

Depending on the nature of threats and the level of alarm in the community, the school may wish to send notes or otherwise communicate with parents stressing the action being taken in the wake of threats, such as daily searches, limited access to the school, and increased police patrols. All members of the school community should be enlisted in efforts to identify perpetrators.

An important strategy in reducing "copycat" behavior working with the media in an effort to not glamorize perpetrator or threatmakers' actions. Some school districts have found it helpful to communicate with editors and news directors about the risks associated certain types of coverage. Management often recognizes the threatmakers' attempts to manipulate the media and choose not to print or air specifics of the threat.

Anniversaries and Other Dates

Anniversaries and important benchmark dates (first day back to school, first day of a new school year, graduation, first-year anniversary, and trial dates) should not be ignored but they should also not be given exaggerated attention. Be especially aware of how similar events in other locations may trigger renewed feelings or latent reactions to the tragedy. Anniversary dates, media coverage, the filing of lawsuits, or similar events in other places can "retraumatize" a community, contributing to feelings of depression and inadequacy.

On anniversaries it is important to establish clear parameters for media coverage. Allow no pictures of grieving students; if necessary, rope off and identify one area for conducting voluntary interviews. Increase security inside and outside the building and consider asking parents to act as volunteer escorts for students and staff if there is a large media presence. The focus is on increasing comfort and security and preserving the school routine. Have a fast, responsive referral system in place for those who need counseling and make passes readily available to students. Commemorative activities which some communities have conducted have included unveiling a memorial garden and having a moment of silence throughout the school.

SAMPLE LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

In cases of an emergency requiring lockdown, the following procedure will be followed by staff and students.

Principal or his designee will announce over the public address system that a lockdown is in effect.

One of the secretaries will be directed to call 911 and notify the police of the emergency and the need for immediate police assistance.

The following announcement will be made:

A. Class in Session (no lunches in progress)
Students and Staff, it is necessary at this time to begin a school wide lockdown. All students are to remain in class. Students in the hall report immediately back to your room. Teachers lock your classroom door. No one is to leave the classroom until an all clear announcement is made by an administrator. Ignore a fire alarm. If we need to evacuate the building, an announcement will be made.

B. Class Change in Progress
Students and Staff, it is necessary at this time to begin a school wide lockdown. All students and teachers report immediately to your next class. Teachers, be at your classroom door and lock as soon as the students have arrived. Ignore a fire alarm. If we need to evacuate the building, an announcement will be made.

C. During Lunch Bells
Students and Staff, it is necessary at this time to begin a school wide lockdown. Students in the cafeteria are to report immediately to the (gym or auditorium ₃whichever is appropriate).   Teachers lock your classroom doors. Students outside of their classroom at this time are to report back to your class immediately. No one is to leave their classroom or designated area until an all clear announcement is made by an administrator. Ignore a fire alarm. If we need to evacuate the building, an announcement will be made.

During the lockdown announcement, the administrator and head custodian will lock the exit doors to prevent entry into the building.

D. Teachers are to do the following:

1. Lock your door.
2. Tell the students that we have an emergency and you don't know what it is.
3. Get the students to go to an area of the room that is away from the door and away from any windows.
4. Have students stay there until an announcement is made. Members of the crisis team will come to your room and update you.

Communications among administrators will be by two-way radio to assess situation and plan next course of action.

The school nurse and attendance clerk will report immediately to the main office during lockdown announcement.

Security Monitors will report to the nearest classroom and maintain radio contact with administrators.

(Sources: Great Bridge High School, Chesapeake City Public Schools, VA and Staunton City Public Schools, VA)

Under lockdown, conditions in a specific classroom can be communicated using color-coded cards. A card, either posted in the window or slipped under the door, can alert emergency responders to the status of students in individual classrooms:

Green card	**No injuries**
Yellow card	**Injuries have occurred but are relatively minor; assistance can be delayed.**
Red card	**Injuries have occurred. Medical assistance is needed immediately.**

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS REGARDING LOCKDOWNS

Dear Parents:

All school personnel have been trained in lockdown procedures. They will be doing their best to ensure that all students are being held in a safe location on campus. Our goal is safe care, custody, and accountability of children.

In a lockdown we will not be able to answer incoming phone calls or make outside calls. Within minutes we will be assisted by police, who will secure the neighboring streets and the building perimeter. No one, including parents, will be allowed near the school during a lockdown.

Students will be kept inside locked classrooms with the blinds drawn. No one will be allowed to leave the classrooms/secure areas on campus until the lockdown is lifted. All students and faculty/staff will remain in the lockdown mode until the police department lifts the lockdown.

When the lockdown is lifted, parents may come to school to pick up their children.

SAMPLE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event that conditions in the school or community necessitate a school evacuation, the following steps are to be taken:

A. Principal

1. Notify appropriate central office contacts:

Contact	Number
Assistant Superintendent	XXX-XXXX
Safety/Security Coordinator)	XXX-XXXX

   (Central Office will notify local radio and television stations.)

2. Notify transportation contact with the number of students and staff requiring evacuation and the number having special needs (e.g., wheelchair lifts).

Contact	Number
Transportation Director	XXX-XXXX

3. Direct clerical staff to take schools' master enrollment lists.

   A print copy is preferable; however, if there is insufficient time to generate the print copy, take the electronic copy on a disk or transmit the file to an alternate location where it can be printed for use at the evacuation site. Taking a laptop computer to the evacuation site may be a workable alternative. Make these plans in advance.

4. Direct school nurse / clinic attendant to prepare medications and appropriate student lists to be transported to the evacuation site.

5. Direct all personnel to leave the building and to secure the building. Persons should be designated to quickly "sweep" the building, checking bathrooms, locker rooms, and other areas in addition to classrooms.

B. Classroom Teachers

1. Plan to evacuate with your students and ride the bus.
2. Take a copy of the class enrollment list.
3. Take roll or otherwise account for all students on buses and at the schools at which they are being housed temporarily.
4. Ensure that requirements of any special needs students are met.
5. Be aware that all staff members will remain on duty until dismissed by the principal/designee.

C. Host School Site

The first choice for shelter during a school evacuation would be another school. Next choices would be a community recreation facility or church. The host school principal should take the following steps:

1. Notify all staff members of the situation.
2. Designate space for evacuees. Access to bathroom facilities and to water are immediate considerations.
3. Assign personnel to greet arriving buses and community evacuees and direct them to pre-identified space.
4. Notify school nurse and anticipate any medical emergencies. Having an emergency medical team / rescue squad on stand-by might be considered.
5. Activate crisis response team to anticipate and attend to any emotional trauma.

In collaboration with the evacuee principal and other officials,

1. Notify parents/guardians by phone if possible. Host school will provide communications resources and assist evacuee school staff in required notifications of parent, day care facilities that pick up at the schools, and other necessary notifications.
2. Designate the location and procedure for release of students to parents who may come to the school.
3. Anticipate any need to feed evacuees and make contact with food services.
4. Take action to control media access and work with school division media liaison.

Terrorism

General Information

The terrorist attacks in September 2001 have brought to light the need for school crisis management plans to include strategies to protect students and staff in the event of subsequent attacks. Two key variables in responding to a terrorist attack are the nature of the terrorist threat and how much warning time there is available. In all cases of terrorist threat school officials should establish and maintain close communication with local public safety officials.

Types of Terrorist Attacks

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) categorizes terrorism in the United States as one of two types—domestic terrorism or international terrorism.

Domestic Terrorism: Involves groups or individuals whose terrorist activities are directed at elements of our government or population without foreign direction.

International Terrorism: Involves groups or individuals whose terrorist activities are foreign-based and/or directed by countries or groups outside the United States or whose activities transcend national boundaries.

- **The Department of Defense estimates that as many as 26 nations may possess chemical agents and/or weapons and an additional 12 may be seeking to develop them.**

- **The Central Intelligence Agency reports that at least ten countries are believed to possess or be conducting research on biological agents for weaponization.**

According to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) likely to be used by terrorists fall into four categories: 1) conventional, 2) chemical, 3) biological, and 4) nuclear. Specific guidelines for schools have not yet been developed; however, some preliminary considerations are set forth below:

Conventional Weapons:

Conventional weapons include bombs and other explosive devices. The goal is to place students and staff in a protected space and / or to increase the distance from the blast area. Possibilities include
- Moving to basement rooms, if possible.
- Move to interior hallways, away from windows, closing doors to exterior rooms.
- Students/staff assume "duck and cover" position.
- Shut off gas utilities.

- If school buildings themselves be targeted, evacuation to other schools or community spaces such as community centers or churches should be considered.
- Release students to their parents / other authorized persons in accordance with emergency release procedures.

Chemical Weapons:

Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals or plants. Most chemical agents cause serious injuries or death.

The goal is to limit exposure to contaminated air.
- In the absence of gas masks which are not available in sufficient quantity and present other practical problems, get all students into buildings, close all windows and doors, and shut off heat, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- Ground level spaces are preferable to basement areas because vapors may settle and become trapped in basements.
- Decisions to evacuate should be based on reliable information from public safety officials about the location of the chemical release and the direction and speed of winds carrying the agent toward or away from the school.
- If students are released to parents, procedures to minimize the penetration of airborne substances must be employed.

Biological Weapons:

Biological agents are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects on people, livestock and crops. They can be dispersed as aerosols or airborne particles.

Biological weapons present a particular challenge because symptoms may not present for days or weeks following exposure. Schools must rely on medical expertise in the development of procedures for responding to biological attack. Consider the following:

- If an attack is identified while it is occurring, schools should get students into buildings, close all doors and windows, and shut down HVAC systems. Just as with chemical weapons, the goal is to prevent or reduce exposure to the substance.
- Release students to their parents / other authorized persons in accordance with emergency release procedures.
- Because many biological weapons are contagious, school will likely be closed after an attack, pending clearance by medical authorities.

Nuclear Weapons

Just as with conventional weapons, the goal is to place students and staff in a protected space and / or to increase the distance from the blast area. Such weapons present a threat of not only blast effect but also exposure to radiation. Possibilities include
- Moving to basement rooms, if possible.

- Move to interior hallways, away from windows, closing doors to exterior rooms.
- Students/staff assume "duck and cover" position.
- Shut off gas utilities.
- Release students to their parents / other authorized persons in accordance with emergency release procedures.

Guidelines for Bio-Hazard Threats

Follow procedures established by your local emergency responders (fire departments, police, SEMA, HAZMAT, etc.) Implement the following procedures if any of your schools receive any kind of bio-hazard threat (including anthrax and chemical agents) or if your schools has a bio-hazard emergency.

- Should you receive such a threat or have an actual bio-hazard emergency, immediately call 911 or report the threat; call the appropriate contact person in your school district.
- The persons immediately exposed to the potential agent MUST remain where they are. They should try to avoid inhaling or touching the substance.
- Try to contain the substance in the package in which it cam. Don't attempt to clean any spilled contents. Cover the spilled contents and the package or letter with anything handy—trash can, cardboard box, paper, etc.
- Proceed with lock-down procedures. Use a code and explain that information will be forthcoming. Try to dispel alarm and panic by keeping information basic. All staff/students should remain in their respective areas until notified otherwise.
- Do not evacuate students outside or send them home until the emergency responders have done their investigation.
- If it is necessary to move or evacuate students and staff to a different location, the HAZMAT team or other emergency responder will provide instructions to administrators as to how it will be done. If students and staff are moved/evacuated, remind staff to take their grade books, purses, and seating charts.
- Administration must inform the custodial/maintenance staff to shut down the heating and air handling units in the affected area.
- Keep the faculty, staff and students as informed as necessary. Work with emergency personnel who will provide the necessary and accurate information.
- Debrief students and staff after the incident.

Related Reading

Guide for All-Hazard, Emergency Operations Planning, State and Local Guide. Chapter 6 -- Terrorism. Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). (2001). Available online at www.fema.gov

Lessons Learned from September 11

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

To gain a better understanding of actions taken in response to September 11, the U.S. Department of Education has met with educators, students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officials, medical experts and mental health professionals from around the country. These meetings were very productive, and the following items were determined to be critical elements to ensuring successful crisis management.

- We strongly urge schools to have a **plan for dealing with crisis**, including crises such as school shootings, suicides, and major accidents, as well as large-scale disasters, such as the events of September 11, that have significant impact on schools throughout the country. We recommend that every school review its school safety plan to ensure that it is comprehensive and addresses a wide range of crisis situations. Schools that do not have a school safety plan should implement a plan immediately. Some suggestions regarding issues that should be addressed in a school safety plan are included at the end of this document.

- Effective school safety plans are developed with **input from, and support of, a variety of public and private agencies,** including agencies representing law enforcement, fire departments, emergency services, victim services, and agencies responsible for homeland security. To be effective, school safety plans must communicate goals and assignments clearly and be updated regularly to remain relevant over time. Whether schools are reviewing existing plans or developing new ones, they should seek to include agencies with relevant expertise that may not have routinely partnered with schools.

- Developing a comprehensive school safety plan is only part of the task. Schools should **conduct practice drills** on a regular basis, and the results of practice activities should be reviewed to determine if revisions are needed. Practices can be incorporated within regularly scheduled safety activities, such as fire drills. Schools are encouraged to maintain contact with agencies that respond to crises, such as local law enforcement and fire departments, emergency preparedness agencies, and the National Guard, to ensure schools are included in any community-wide emergency preparedness drills.

- During a crisis, there is no guarantee that normal chains of communication, command, and control will work as intended. Communications between schools and central headquarters can be disrupted, delayed, or otherwise impeded during a crisis. School-level administrators cannot be certain that information, guidance, or orders will be available, and they must have the skills and confidence to respond to any crisis situation they might face. School administrators are encouraged to **consider several options for overcoming communication difficulties.** First, they may want to delegate decision-making authority to building-level principals during times of crisis. School district officials should work closely with law enforcement officials and other emergency service agencies in advance of a crisis situation to ensure that clear lines of authority are established and well known. Finally, we encourage officials to work with experts in the telecommunications field to understand what communication links are likely to be affected in certain circumstances, and explore back-up systems or plans, including "low-tech" or nontraditional communications strategies.

- Accurate and timely information on a crisis needs to be provided to students, family members, and faculty when appropriate. Absent such information, rumors and false information are likely to spread, which can cause additional problems for school and

law enforcement officials. Therefore, school districts should develop a **detailed procedure for providing accurate and timely information** to students, parents, and faculty.

- School policies that address typical problems may not provide adequate guidance regarding some situations faced by schools in recent years. Policies need to be reviewed to make sure they address a wide range of situations. We encourage school districts to **review policies related to the possession of cell phones, terror hoaxes, and assessment of threats** against schools, students, and faculty. We believe all threats made against students, faculty, and school property must be taken seriously and handled appropriately. We also encourage schools to work with parents, faculty and students to develop strategies for publicizing the serious consequences associated with making threats.

- **School safety plans must address issues beyond safety, and consider the health and mental health needs** of students, faculty, and parents that result from a crisis. Crises such as the ones experienced at Columbine and on September 11 affect students, faculty, and parents, to varying degrees, in every school district. When addressing health and mental health issues, school safety plans should recognize that some students, faculty, and parents might need these health-related services for long periods of time. We recommend that every school safety plan include a section that deals with recovery issues, including the health and mental health needs of students, faculty, and parents.

- Almost every community has access to the health and mental health services that can address the needs of those affected by crisis, but many school districts have not developed linkages with the organizations that can provide these services, and as a result, these services are not immediately available in time of crisis. We encourage school districts to **initiate conversations with local health and mental health providers and develop "memoranda of understanding" to delineate roles and responsibilities in times of crisis**.

- Schools experiencing major crises invariably receive an outpouring of support from potential volunteers who want to help. However, few districts have a plan in place to **screen volunteers** to make sure they are qualified and suitable to provide services in schools. We recommend that school safety plans include a process for screening persons who volunteer to assist during a crisis. Schools may want to consider having a cadre of experts and other service providers prescreened, so they can participate in emergency response activities without any delay.

- Only a few school districts have staff members who are adequately trained to deal with the results of a crisis such as a school shooting or the events of September 11. We encourage every district to **designate and train a person, or group, to act as lead official(s) for response to crisis situations**.

- Students are sometimes further traumatized by actions taken, often with the best intentions, by teachers, faculty, and parents. Constantly retelling or reshowing portrayals of violent events can have a traumatic effect on students. School districts are encouraged to work with mental health service providers, teachers, and parent groups to **establish guidelines for activities that respect the developmental capacity of students.**

Additions to Consider for School Safety Plans in Response to September 11

Schools need to develop comprehensive school safety plans that address the variety of crises they might face. While many schools and school districts have revised school plans to address shootings such as the tragedy at Columbine High School, the terrorist attacks in New York City and Virginia raise concerns that may not be addressed in current plans. The information below identifies specific concerns and suggests possible approaches to addressing them.

Evacuation: A major crisis may require several schools to be evacuated simultaneously. Because school plans frequently call for students to be evacuated to other schools in the district, alternate evacuation sites and routes should be identified. This will necessitate coordination of safety plans for individual schools with district-wide plans. Special plans are also necessary to address the threat or suspicion of bio-terrorism. In these situations, evacuation procedures must ensure that cross-contamination does not occur.

Attendance: In a major crisis, schools may need to quickly account for students. A plan for collecting and maintaining accurate attendance figures throughout the school day is necessary to provide data for this process. Schools should remember that attendance records should be stored in locations that are readily accessible to teachers, administrators, emergency service workers, and law enforcement officials.

Information for Parents: Parents expect schools to provide quick and accurate information regarding the location and status of their children. Schools should establish procedures for making such notifications and should regularly share those procedures with parents. A major crisis impacting an entire community may also require evacuation of parents or other caregivers from their homes or places of employment. As a result, school safety plans need to address alternatives for communicating with parents. This scenario also requires schools to examine procedures for releasing students to parents or other caregivers. If parents or other designated individuals cannot reach their students, or if students cannot be transported to their homes, schools should have a plan to respond appropriately.

Transportation: Alternate strategies for transporting students during evacuations and/or to their homes must be considered. During a large-scale crisis, usual methods for transporting students may not be available. Further, schools located in some sites such as military bases may be closed to the public, thus alternatives for transporting those students would be necessary.

Lead Official: Every school site should have one person designated "lead official," who is well-trained, well-acquainted with all aspects of the school safety plan, and has the authority to take charge during a crisis. In addition to the lead official, schools should have a deputy or assistant lead official in case the lead official is not available in a time of crisis. Lead officials should meet regularly with law enforcement and other emergency responders to clearly define the roles and responsibilities for everyone involved.

Helping Children Cope with Crisis: Advice for Parents and Teachers

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of School Psychologists offered the following advice for helping children cope:

For Parents and All Adults

- Be calm. Children take emotional cues from parents and other significant adults.

- Reassure children that they and their loved ones are safe. Explain that the World Trade Center and Pentagon were targeted by terrorists because they symbolize our nation's economic and military strength and that schools, homes, and other offices are safe.

- Monitor or restrict viewing of television coverage. Overexposure to graphic scenes can traumatize young children.

- Stick to facts when discussing current events with or around children. Don't embellish news reports or dwell on morbid or sensational details.

- Remind children that good people such as police officers, firemen, doctors, emergency medical technicians, and members of the armed forces are helping those who are hurt and working to prevent additional attacks.

- Remind children that it is not fair to blame all members of a religious or ethnic group for the actions of a few.

- Children also may find comfort and reassurance by participating in communal expressions of concern, including religious services.

- As far as possible, maintain family routines for meals, homework, chores, and bedtime.

For Schools and Teachers

- Let children express their feelings – including anger. Inform parents if children display extreme levels of anxiety, fear, or anger. If warranted, advise parents of the availability of school and community counseling services.

- Empower children by telling them that there are things they can do to help. Children can make and send get-well cards to injured survivors or write letters to the families of victims. Children also can put up flags or create patriotic posters or displays to express their support for our country during this time.

- Be mindful of children who may have a personal connection to the tragedies in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Children who have recently visited the Pentagon or the World Trade Center may feel a personal loss.

- Adherence to established school schedules and classroom routines may reduce anxiety among young children.

- Potentially upsetting information should be shared by teachers directly with students and not announced over the public address systems.

- Allow time for age-appropriate classroom discussion of current events. Teachers should guide discussion but not dominate.

- Listen for students' cues while providing information and guiding discussions of current events.

- Be sensitive to the anxiety some students may feel if a parent or other loved one is required to travel, especially by air.

- Include school psychologists, counselors, and crisis team members in planning for future domestic and international events. Incorporate strategies for troubleshooting and monitoring student needs.

Source: Joint statement of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of School Psychologists, September 2001.

Related Reading

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Handbook for Coping After Terrorism: A Guide to Healing and Recovery. This handbook provides victims of terrorism with information based on the expertise of mental health professionals, crisis counseling, and victim assistance professionals. Available free by calling 800-627-6872 and asking for NCJ190249.

SAMPLE PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING SUSPICIOUS OR THREATENING LETTERS OR PACKAGES

1. Do not open any letter or package until you have inspected it thoroughly. According to the Postal Service, some typical characteristics that ought to trigger suspicion include letters or parcels that:
   - Have any powdery substance on the outside
   - Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you
   - Have excessive postage, handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words
   - Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated
   - Have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate
   - Are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped
   - Have an unusual amount of tape
   - Are marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
   - Have strange odors or stains

2. Contact your principal or supervisor who will call the appropriate public safety officials and describe the situation. The school division central office is to be notified also.

3. If a suspicious or threatening letter is received, the Postal Service advises
   - Handle with care. Don't shake or bump the package.
   - Don't open, smell, touch or taste the letter or package or its contents.
   - Isolate the suspicious item.

4. Anyone in the immediate vicinity of the letter must remain in the area. Take steps to admit no additional persons to the area. The room and adjoining rooms should be secured.

5. The custodian / maintenance staff will shut off the HVAC system.

6. Depending on the advice of public safety officials, the building may need to be evacuated and/or quarantined.

The Postal Service also recommends that if a letter/parcel is opened and/or a biological or chemical threat is identified:
   - Isolate it—Don't handle it.
   - Evacuate the immediate area.
   - Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
   - Call the police.
   - Contact postal inspectors.
   - Call the local fire department/HAZMAT Unit.

Related Issues

Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are a significant problem to schools throughout the United States. Although more than 90% of bomb threats turn out to be pranks, school divisions must take each threat seriously because of the real potential for death and serious injury.

In locations where bomb threats occur frequently, school officials should work with telephone companies to install technology that can facilitate attempts to trace threatening calls. In addition, since hoax calls are often perpetrated by students who are absent from school, the day's absentee list should be examined carefully for potential sources of such calls.

Essentials

1. All threats are taken seriously.
2. The school district has procedures in place to deal with bomb threats:
   a. A checklist to guide the action of the individual who receives a threat over the telephone;
   b. Notification procedures (including law enforcement);
   c. Search procedures;
   d. Procedures for safely evacuating the building(s) as appropriate; and,
   e. Procedures for securing the crime scene.

Evacuation: Pros and Cons

1. There is no black and white line for determining when to evacuate the school; evacuation may not be the most appropriate strategy.
2. When students see an immediate evacuation each time a bomb threat is received, they quickly learn that the best way to get out of class is to call in a bomb threat.
3. All bomb threats must be taken seriously and carefully analyzed. Factors to consider include:
   a. Have there been national bomb incidents lately?
   b. Have there been other hoaxes lately?
   c. Has a hostile student been suspended recently?
   d. Are there exams scheduled for today?
   e. Is there any unexplained student unrest?
   f. Are there any rumors circulating about a student threatening to harm others?
   g. How much information did the caller provide? How specific is the information? (In general, you can get more specific information out of a caller when it is not a hoax).
   h. How serious was the caller's voice?
   I. Are there any missing chemicals?
   j. Have there been any recent break-ins?

k. Did the caller give repeated warnings? (This seriously escalates the degree of danger.)

l. Are there surveillance video tapes to check?

Action Alternatives

1. Conduct a low profile search of the exterior grounds and public areas of the building.
2. Conduct a comprehensive search having all staff search their work area, in addition to the grounds and public areas.
3. Search with partial evacuation.
4. Evacuate after searching.
5. Evacuate immediately after clearing exit routes and assembly areas.

When conducting a search:
   a) No two-way radios or cell phones should be used.
   b) Searches should be systematic; conducted in levels:
      First, search the floor and area up to waist high;
      Second, search waist high to chin high; and
      Third, search chin high to the ceiling.

Suspicious objects should not be touched. Law enforcement should be notified.

Strategies to Discourage Bomb Threats

1. Do not release students but relocate them onto buses or into other facilities while the search is conducted.

2. Require lost time to be made up on weekends or at the end of the school year.

Related Readings

National School Safety Center (NSSC) <u>Sample Crisis Response Plan – Bomb Threat, Bomb Threat with Suspicious Package, and Actual Bomb Explosion</u>.
Access at http://www.center-school.org/viol_prev/css/nsscbombchart.pdf

<u>Bomb Threats and Physical Security Planning</u>, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Department of the Treasury.
Access at http://ericcass.uncg.edu/virtuallib/violence/bombthreat.pdf

<u>Managing Bomb Threats for School Administrators</u> by Marie Courtney.
Access on the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress website at <u>www.aaets.org/arts/art99.htm</u>.

<u>Coming in Fall 2002</u>: An Interactive CD-ROM for school administrators about bomb threat assessment from the U.S. Department of Education and the ATF. Check www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS for more information.

Natural Disasters

Earthquake

Preparation - Identifying Potential Hazards

In the event of earthquake, objects such as the following could cause serious injuries to students and staff:

- Unsecured bookshelves
- Unsecured wall shelves
- Freestanding cabinets
- Unsecured television monitors and other equipment
- Rolling pianos
- Hanging plants
- Heavy objects stored in high locations.

Some questions for the school safety team:

- Are toxic, corrosive, and flammable materials (including lab supplies and chemicals) stored properly and securely?
- Are warning signs posted in areas housing hazardous materials?
- Are appliances (water heaters, space heaters, power tools, etc.) securely anchored?
- Are fire extinguishers checked according to fire code requirements and secured against falling?
- Are office cabinets secured against falling; do drawers have adequate latches to prevent contents from spilling?
- Are "portable" buildings properly tied to foundations?
- Are automatic gas shut-off valves installed?
- Are light fixtures and ceiling fans adequately supported?

Securing Evacuation Routes

It is important to consider various emergency scenarios and to identify hazards that may exist -- or which could occur -- along the designated evacuation routes. Although some of the hazards listed below are particularly relevant for earthquake situations, many of them apply for other emergency situations. Local fire officials may be able to assist in carrying out this assessment.

Do hallways and/or doors contain glass panels? Are these panels of safety (tempered) glass?

Do lockers, bookshelves and other storage units line the hallways? After an earthquake or storm, hallways may be cluttered with debris from ceilings, fallen light fixtures, broken glass, and toppled storage units. Students should be advised to anticipate these hazards.

Is lighting dependent on electricity rather than sunlight? If the lights fail in enclosed hallways or stairs, it will be much more difficult for students and staff to evacuate safely. Are emergency lights present and secured against falling?

Does your school have elevators? Elevators are extremely vulnerable to damage from earthquakes. Post signs near the elevators prohibiting their use in the event of fire and earthquakes. Make sure you have plans and procedures for helping mobility-impaired students and staff evacuate safely from all parts of the facility.

Do the exit routes pass under canopies? In an earthquake or strong storm, exterior canopies, roof-overhangs, porches, and supporting columns may collapse. Escape routes could be blocked or become hazardous.

Is the school building faced with parapets, balconies or cornices? Roof tiles, parapets, balconies, cornices and other structural elements may fall during an earthquake. These structures may be weakened and not fall immediately.

Are gas, sewer and power lines located near the evacuation routes or near outdoor assembly areas? If the school must be evacuated, students and personnel should not go to areas where these hazards are located. There could be greater risk of harm to students and staff, and their presence could hinder repair crews.

Neighboring Hazards

The school team also needs to evaluate the neighborhood and areas adjacent to school grounds for potential hazards including businesses and factories. These hazards could affect evacuation routes or present additional hazards. Some neighboring hazards that may require specific planning include the following:

- Facilities containing toxic, chemically reactive, flammable and radioactive materials.
- High-voltage power lines
- Transportation routes of vehicles carrying hazardous materials
- Underground gas and oil pipelines
- Underground utility vaults and above ground transformers
- Multi-story buildings vulnerable to damage or collapse
- Water towers and storage tanks
- Storage facilities for agricultural chemicals.

Source: State of Missouri Crisis Response Plan, September 1999. Access at www.dps.state.mo.us/home/SchoolCrisisPlan.PDF

Tornado

Developing a Severe Weather Emergency Plan for Your School

Designate a Plan Coordinator
Select a staff member who has an interest in weather and how is willing to attend a local National Weather Service spotter training program.

Set Up an In-School Weather Information Center
- Use a tonal alert National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio.
- Locate the weather radio near the person responsible for enacting the plan.
- Display a map showing local counties and towns; use to locate storms and track their movement in reference to your school.

Establish a Method of Alerting Teachers and Students
- Use a PA system with back-up alerting device such as a compressed air horn or megaphone.
- Provide wireless communication devices for detached buildings and gymnasiums.
- Make arrangements for handicapped students or others needing assistance.

Identify Tornado and High Wind Safety Zones Within the School
- Get recommendations from an engineer or architect.
- Locate areas of best protection: small interior rooms, bathrooms, windowless interior hallways (with sort roof spans).
- Stay away from areas of highest probability of failure: exterior walls and windows, rooms with large roof spans, upper level rooms, roof, interior glass, non-load bear walls, mobile classrooms.

Set Guidelines for Activating the Severe Weather Plan
- <u>Thunder</u>: Delay outdoor activities.
- <u>Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Watch</u>: Postpone outdoor activities, move students from mobile classrooms and gymnasiums, post school personnel trained in spotting severe weather to watch the storms as they approach, move students from areas with skylights.
- <u>Tornado Warning</u>: Should your school be in the storm path, enact an immediate "call to action." Before the storm arrives, begin moving students from unsafe areas, post a trained employee to act as a storm spotter. Move all students to tornado safe areas. If winds begin to pick up, have students and teachers drop immediately into the protective position.

Plan for Special Problems
- Consider what to do if classes are changing, students are at lunch, or the buses are about to leave as the storm threatens.
- Make arrangements for disconnecting the gas and electricity.

Practice the Severe Weather Emergency Plan
- Conduct drills in September and March.
- Coordinate drills with a severe weather education and awareness program.

TORNADO / SEVERE WEATHER

Each school should develop a tornado drill annually. Procedures for both Tornado *Watch* and Tornado *Warning* will be practiced.

Each school should develop a map to determine *areas of shelter* to be used during a tornado emergency. Areas of large roof expanses (gyms and cafeterias), and areas with considerable glass should not be used as shelters. The safest shelter areas are interior windowless rooms and hallways that have load-bearing walls and are on the lowest possible level. Upon request, Risk Management & Security staff will assist school staff in conducting a building assessment.

TORNADO WATCH (No funnel clouds have been sighted but weather conditions exist that are conducive to their formation.)

PRINCIPAL

Advise teachers and staff via the P.A. system that a tornado *watch* is in effect.

Advise teachers to review the "drop and tuck" command and designated *areas of shelter* with students.

Designate staff to monitor NOAA and television broadcasts for additional information.

Bring students located outside of the building or in classroom trailers into the main building.

Advise the custodian or building engineer to be prepared to shut off the main gas supply valve in the event of a tornado *warning*.

Ensure that a plan is in place to assist special needs students and staff.

Have an alternate plan of communication ready should there be a loss of power (e.g., bull horn, phone tree, or runners.)

TEACHERS

Review the "drop and tuck" command designated *areas of shelter* with students.

Close windows and blinds.

Be prepared to "drop and tuck" under desks if the immediate command is given over the P.A. system or if there is an immediate need to do so.

"DROP AND TUCK"

Protect yourself . . .

- **Lie face down,**
- **Draw your knees up under you,**
- **Cover the back of your head with your hands.**

Tornado Danger Signs

Severe Thunderstorms - Thunder, lightning, heavy rains, and strong winds.
Hail - Pellets of ice from dark-clouded skies.
Roaring Noise - Like a hundred railroad locomotives; crashing thunderous sound.
Funnel - Dark, spinning "rope" or column from the sky to the ground.

TORNADO WARNING (A funnel cloud has been sighted or indicated on radar. The approximate location and direction is usually broadcast during the warning.)

Principal
- Advise teachers and staff of the tornado *warning.*
- Advise all teachers to escort classes to their pre-designated *areas of shelter.*
- Notify pre-designated staff to keep a look out in order to spot tornado funnels. Depending on their position, these staff may need a means to make immediate contact with the Principal if a funnel cloud is sighted.
- Be prepared to give the "drop and tuck" command via the P.A. system if danger is imminent. Occupants may need to "drop and tuck" under desks if they have not yet been moved to *areas of shelter* in the school.
- Delay bus departures.
- Parents picking up students should be advised of the tornado *warning* and persuaded to stay with their child.
- Have immediate access to the contents of the crisis management kit and distribute flashlights as necessary.

Teachers
- Escort students to the pre-designated *areas of shelter.*
- Take a class roster and account for all students.
- Ensure that students sit quietly against a wall on the floor and that they understand the "drop and tuck" command.
- Close all fire doors and gates along the corridor to minimize injury from flying debris.

Custodian/Engineer
- Shut off main gas supply valve.
- Be prepared to shut off all other utilities if necessary.

Bus Drivers
- Drive at a ninety-degree angle from the funnel cloud and seek shelter in the closest building if there is time.
- If no building is available, highway underpasses can provide protection. Park the bus down wind so it will not be blown back to your position. Escort the students to shelter up under the underpass.
- If caught near the open, escort the students to a low area such as a ditch, ravine, or culvert.
- Have students lie face down with hands covering their heads.
- Report in as soon as danger has passed.

IF BUILDING IS STRUCK BY A TORNADO

Principal
- Ensure utilities are shut off.
- Call 911 and give a situation report.
- Determine who was injured and administer first aid.
- Carefully evacuate damaged areas.
- Notify: Superintendent
	Risk Management & Security
- Take roll and conduct a search for missing students and staff, if safe to do so.
- Account for and release students to parents only after a complete roll call has been reported.
- Maintain a list of all injured students and staff. Keep an accurate record of the hospitals to which any were sent.
- Establish a means to disseminate information to parents and media.

Fujita Tornado Scale

F-0:   40-72 mph, chimney damage, tree branches broken
F-1:   73-112 mph, mobile homes pushed off foundation or overturned
F-2:   113-157 mph, considerable damage, mobile homes demolished, trees uprooted
F-3:   158-206 mph, roofs and walls torn down, trains overturned, cars thrown
F-4:   207-260 mph, well-constructed walls leveled
F-5:   261-318 mph, homes lifted off foundation and carried considerable distances, autos thrown as far as 100 meters

Information obtained at: www.doe.state.in.us/safety/level3/tornado.htm
www.fema.gov/library/tornado.htm

(Source: Department of Risk Management and Security, Prince William County Public Schools, Manassas, VA)

Sheltering in Place

Sheltering in Place (SIP) is the purposeful act of keeping students and staff inside the building in a predetermined area. In some instances SIP is the best defense against hazardous situations such as the release of toxic chemicals, or a dangerous situation unfolding outside the school building. In many cases, the regular classroom will be the designated SIP location for most students. School plans, however, also must provide for moving students from other locations such as playgrounds, gym, cafeteria, and parking lot into the secure SIP areas.

Major steps:

1. Move students and staff into designated locations within the facility.
2. Close all windows and lock doors.
3. Notify law enforcement or other emergency services as appropriate.
4. Seal the room from outside air filtration in the event of fumes or chemicals.
5. Monitor the situation with all communication devices available. This may require turning on radio/TV for further instructions.

During the SIP activation:
1. Remain calm and in charge of students.
2. Engage students in quiet activities.
3. Monitor students for signs of anxiety and stress.
4. Stay in the SIP room until the all-clear is given.

Following the SIP activation:
1. Prepare communications for parents explaining what occurred and how it was resolved.
2. Debrief with staff.

In planning for SIP,
1. Inform parents about the school's procedures for using SIP.
2. Plan for the availability of first aid supplies and critical medications.
3. Work out details for restroom needs.

Source: State of Missouri Crisis Response Plan, September 1999. Access at www.dps.state.mo.us/home/SchoolCrisisPlan.PDF

Rape

(Source: California Association of School Administrators)

When a school is notified that a rape has occurred to a student or staff member, the Crisis Response Team and the school must protect the identify and right to privacy of the rape survivor and the alleged perpetrator. News of the incident should be contained as much as possible. Appropriate response by school staff will be directed at minimizing the fear of fellow students and quelling the spread of rumors. As opposed to convening a Crisis Response Team meeting and alerting the student body, services provided to the victim and her/his family should be kept confidential and should be coordinated with outside providers, such as a rape crisis team or hospital emergency room.

RAPE ONLY BECOMES A CRISIS TO BE MANAGED BY SCHOOL STAFF WHEN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS EXIST:
- A rape occurs on campus.
- A member of the rape survivor's family requests school intervention.
- The rape survivor's friends requests intervention.
- Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging.
- Students witness police action or emergency services response.

When one or more of the above conditions exists, the following should be implemented:
- Direct the person providing the information not to repeat it elsewhere in the school.
- If the rape occurred on campus, notify the appropriate law enforcement office and/or local rape crisis team.
- If office staff members heard the report, tell then not to repeat or give out any information within or outside school unless they are specifically told to do so.
- Designate the Crisis Response Team member closest to the victim to talk to her/him about the types of support he or she and the closest friends need, and the person(s) the rape survivor would like to provide that support.
- Provide space in the school for the rape survivor and identified peers to receive support services. Provide necessary passes to release these students from class to receive services.

Rape is a crime of violence. For the rape survivor, it often is an experience of fear, loss of control, humiliation, and violence. Rape survivors may experience a full range of emotional reactions. It is extremely beneficial for rape survivors to seek emotional support regarding the assault. Monitor any school intervention in a rape incident with the following checklist:

SAMPLE RAPE RESPONSE CHECKLIST

School involvement in incident due to:

- ❑ Rape occurrence on campus
- ❑ Survivor's family requests school intervention
- ❑ Survivor's friends request intervention
- ❑ Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging
- ❑ Students witness police/emergency services
- ❑ Information provider/recipients enjoined not to repeat information elsewhere

Steps taken to protect survivor's identity and right to privacy.

- ❑ Law enforcement and rape crisis agency notified if appropriate.

- ❑ Crisis Response Team member closest to victim designated to talk with student and determine type of support and support provider desired.

- ❑ Rape survivor encouraged to seek additional support from community rape crisis agency.

- ❑ Space provided on site for rape survivor and identified peers to receive support services.

- ❑ School services coordinated as appropriate and legal with outside service providers.

- ❑ Action taken to quell rumors.

- ❑ All records related to rape incident and services provided stored in confidential file.

Post-Incident Recovery

REACTIONS TO TRAUMA/DISASTER

What to Expect After Trauma:
Possible Reactions in Elementary School Students

1. Feelings of anxiety, fears, and worries about safety of self and others (more clingy to teacher or parent).
2. Worries about re-occurrence of violence.
3. Increased levels of distress (whiny, irritable, more "moody")
4. Changes in behavior:
    a) Increased activity level
    b) Decreased concentration and/or attention
    c) Withdrawal
    d) Angry outbursts
    e) Aggression
    f) Absenteeism
5. Increased somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, aches and pains)
6. Changes in school performance
7. Recreating event (e.g., talking repeatedly about it, "playing" the event)
8. Increased sensitivity to sounds (e.g., sirens, planes, thunder, backfires, loud noises)
9. Statements and questions about death and dying

In addition, at home parents may see:

1. Changes in sleep
2. Changes in appetite
3. Withdrawal
4. Lack of interest in usual activities
5. Increased negative behaviors (e.g., defiance) or emotions (e.g., sadness, fears, anger, worries)
6. Regression in behaviors (e.g., baby talk, bedwetting, tantrums)
7. Hate or anger statements

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

**What to Expect After Trauma:
Possible Reactions in Middle School Students**

1. Feelings of anxiety, worries, and fears about safety of self and others
2. Worries about re-occurrence or consequences such as war, as well as worries about school violence
3. Changes in behavior:
   a) Decreased attention and/or concentration
   b) Increase in hyperactivity
   c) Changes in academic performance
   d) Irritability with friends, teachers, events
   e) Anger outbursts and/or aggression
   f) Withdrawal
   g) Absenteeism
4. Increased somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, chest pains)
5. Discomfort with feelings, particularly those associated with revenge
6. Increased likelihood to discuss the gruesome details
7. Repeated discussions of event
8. Increased sensitivity to sounds (e.g., sirens, planes, thunder, backfires, loud noises)
9. Negative impact on issues of trust and perceptions of others, particularly of those that are "different"
10. Repetitive thoughts and comments about death and dying

In addition, at home parents may see:

1. Changes in sleep or appetite
2. Withdrawal
3. Lack of interest in usual activities (e.g., after-school activities, time with friends)
4. Increased negative behaviors (e.g., defiance) or emotions (e.g., sadness, fears, anger, worries)
5. Hate or anger statements
6. Denial of impact

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What to Expect After Trauma:
Possible Reactions in High School Students

1. Worries, fears, and anxiety about safety of self and others
2. Worries about re-occurrence or repercussions such as war or school violence
3. Changes in behavior:
   a) Withdrawal
   b) Irritability with friends, teachers, events
   c) Anger outbursts and/or aggression
   d) Changes in academic performance
   e) Decrease in attention and concentration
   f) Increase in hyperactivity
   g) Absenteeism
4. Discomfort with feelings, particularly revenge, but also those of vulnerability
5. Increased risk for substance abuse, including drinking
6. Discussion of events and reviewing of details
7. Negative impact on issues of trust and perceptions of others, particularly those that are "different"
8. Increased sensitivity to sounds (sirens, planes, thunder, backfires, or loud noises)
9. Repetitive thoughts and comments about death or dying (including suicidal thoughts)

In addition, at home parents may see:
1. Changes in sleep or appetite
2. Withdrawal
3. Lack of interest in usual activities (after-school activities or time with friends)
4. Increased negative behaviors (defiance) or emotions (sadness, fears, or anger, worries)
5. Hate or anger statements
6. Denial of impact

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What to Expect After Trauma:
Reactions in Teachers

1. Increased irritability and impatience with students and staff (decreased tolerance of minor student infractions- remember, they are trying to cope, too)
2. Difficulty planning classroom activities and lessons
3. Decreased concentration
4. Worries and fears that answers or responses to students could make things worse for them
5. Worries about re-occurrence and repercussions
6. Increased concern about school violence (e.g., hypersensitivity)
7. Feelings of discomfort with intense emotions, such as anger and fear
8. Denial that the traumatic event may impact the students

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS FOLLOWING TRAUMA/DISASTER

What Can I Do to Help?
Guidelines for Elementary School Teachers

Reinforce ideas of safety and security. This may be needed multiple times, particularly in response to changes, loud sounds, or other events that may remind the students of the tragedy. After any classroom discussion of the event, end the discussion with a focus on their current safety and a calming activity, such as taking deep breaths, working together on an art project, or holding hands and singing a quiet song.

Maintain a predictable class schedule and rules to provide support and consistency for the children.

Listen to and tolerate your students retelling of events, as well as playing out the events. Schedule specific times for discussion and play during the school day to allow for opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about the tragedy; however, set limits on scary or hurtful play.

Encourage students to talk about confusing feelings, worries, daydreams, and disruptions of concentration by accepting the feelings, listening carefully, and reminding students that these are normal reactions (any of these feelings are okay) following a very scary event. Information focused on safety will be important. For example, the President of the USA and other "helping people" (e.g., the firefighters, military, police, doctors) are all working together to make us safe (give examples). A review of school safety rules may also be helpful.

Some students might express hate toward a large group of people. It can be helpful to validate their strong feelings of anger. However, it will be critical to help the students separate thoughts and feelings about the specific people who caused the tragedy from generalizing it to larger groups of people, including their classmates or other people they might know (e.g., all people of Arab descent).

Young children will process the information about the events at unpredictable times throughout the day. As they try to develop an understanding of what has happened, they may ask questions that may be initially shocking to adults. Try to respond in a calm manner, answering the questions in simple, direct terms and helping the students transition back to their activity.

Use simple, direct terms to describe what happened. Avoid terms designed to "soften" the information, which inadvertently further confuses children. For example, use the term "died," rather than "went to sleep."

Students may misunderstand information about the event as they are trying to make sense of what happened. For example, they may blame themselves,

believe things happened that did not happen, believe that terrorists are in the school, etc. Gently help students develop a realistic understanding of the event.

Students may ask the same types of questions repeatedly, which can be confusing and/or frustrating for teachers. Understand that students may need to hear the information multiple times before being able to integrate and understand it. Give the students time to cope with fears.

Expect some angry outbursts from students. Try to catch students before they "act out," by taking them aside, and helping them calm down and regain control of their behavior.

Do classroom activities that will reinforce the message that one person can make a difference to help and heal. Activities can include drawing pictures and sending cards or class projects of collecting pennies or aluminum cans.

Encourage some distraction times, which would include doing school work that that does not require high levels of new learning, as well as enjoyable activities.

Expect some brief, temporary declines in the students' school performance. Consider reducing homework as the nation heals and the national routine is stabilized (e.g., parents are back to work, no additional threats).

Provide reassurance to the students that feelings will get smaller and easier to handle over time.

Expect and understand students' regression (acting younger) and other difficult behaviors that are not typical of the students.

Protect students from re-exposure to frightening situations and reminders of trauma. This includes limiting teacher-to-teacher conversations about the events in front of students.

Maintain communication with other teachers, school personnel, and parents to monitor how the students are coping with the demands of school, home, and community activities.

Remain aware of your own reactions to students' trauma. It is okay to express emotions to your students, such as "I am feeling sad about what happened." However, if you are feeling overwhelmed with emotion, it is important to take care of yourself and seek support from other teachers and staff.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What Can I Do To Help?
Guidelines for Teachers of Middle School Students

Reinforce ideas of safety and security. This may be needed multiple times, particularly in response to changes/loud sounds/or other events that may remind the students of the tragedy. After any classroom discussion of the event, end the discussion with a focus on their current safety and a calming activity, such as taking deep breaths, working together on an art project, or having a moment of quiet reflection.

Listen to and tolerate your students retelling of events, as well as playing out the events. Maintain a predictable class schedule and rules to provide support and consistency for the students. Schedule specific times for discussion during the school day to allow for opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about the tragedy. This may need to be done in multiple classes; however, set limits on scary or hurtful talk (e.g., specific threats of retribution).

Encourage the students to talk about confusing feelings, worries, daydreams, and disruptions of concentration by accepting the feelings, listening carefully, and reminding the students that these are normal reactions (any of these feelings are okay) following a very scary event. Discuss students' perceptions of media descriptions of events. Information focused on safety will be important. For example, the President of the USA and other "helping people" (e.g., the firefighters, military, police, doctors) are all working together to make us safe (give examples). Review of school safety rules may also be helpful.

Some students might express hate toward a large group of people. It can be helpful to validate their strong feelings of anger. However, it will be critical to help the students separate thoughts and feelings about the specific people who caused the tragedy from generalizing it to larger groups of people, including their classmates or other people they might know (e.g., all people of Arab descent). It may be helpful to have discussions about how world leaders can help with reducing hate and preventing future violent acts.

Students will often process the information about the events at unpredictable times throughout the day. As they try to develop an understanding of what has happened, they may ask questions that may be initially shocking to adults, including questions that have gruesome details or focus on death. Try to respond in a calm manner, answering the questions in simple and direct terms and helping the students transition back to their activity.

Use simple direct terms to describe what happened, rather than terms designed to "soften" the information, which inadvertently further confuses the students. For example, use the term "died", rather than "went to sleep".

Students will often misunderstand information about the event as they are trying to make sense of what happened. For example, they may blame themselves; may believe things happened that did not happen, may believe that terrorists are in the school. Gently help students develop a realistic understanding of the event.

Students may ask the same types of questions repeatedly, which can be confusing and/or frustrating for the teacher. Understand that students may need to hear the information multiple times before being able to integrate and understand it. Give the students time to cope with fears.

Expect some angry outbursts from students. Try to catch students before they "act out", by taking them aside, and helping them calm down and regain control of their behavior. In addition redirect students who are being irritable with each other which could escalate to direct conflict.

Do classroom activities that will reinforce the message that one person can make a difference to help and heal. Activities can include drawing pictures and sending cards or class projects of collecting pennies or aluminum cans or making origami cranes.

Encourage some distraction times, which would include doing school work that that does not require high levels of new learning as well as enjoyable activities. Help students do activities that allow them to experience mastery and build self-esteem.

Expect some brief (temporary) declines in the students' school performance. Consider suspending standardized testing and classroom testing for the rest of the week. Also, consider reducing homework as the nation heals until the national routine is stabilized (e.g., parents are back to work, no additional treats).

Provide reassurance to the students that feelings will get smaller and easier to handle over time.

Protect students from re-exposure to frightening situations and reminders of trauma. This includes limiting teacher-to-teacher conversations about the events in front of the students.

Maintain communication with other teachers, school personnel, and parents to monitor how the students are coping with the demands of school, home, and community activities. Should difficulties coping with the event persist and interfere with the students' functioning, consider seeking help from a mental health professional. In addition to helping those who are clearly angry or depressed, monitor students who are withdrawn and isolated from others.

Remain aware of your own reactions to student's "trauma". It is okay to express emotions to your students, such as "I am feeling sad about what happened." However, if you are feeling overwhelmed with emotion, it is important to take care of yourself and to seek support from other teachers and staff.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What Can I Do To Help?
Guidelines for Teachers of High School Students

Reinforce ideas of safety and security, even though many high school students will not verbalize fears around these issues. This may be needed multiple times, particularly in response to changes, loud sounds, or other events that may remind students of the tragedy. After any classroom discussion of the event, end the discussion with a focus on their current safety and a calming activity, such as having a moment of quiet reflection.

Maintain a predictable class schedule and rules to provide support and consistency for the students.

Listen to and tolerate your students retelling of events. Schedule specific times for discussion during the school day to allow for opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about the tragedy; however, set limits on scary or hurtful talk (e.g., specific threats of retribution). This may need to be done in multiple classes.

Encourage students to talk about confusing feelings, worries, daydreams, and disruptions of concentration by accepting feelings, listening carefully, and reminding students that these are normal reactions following a very scary event. Discuss students' perceptions of media descriptions of events.

Information focused on safety will be important. For example, discuss what the United States and other world leaders are doing to address safety. From this tragedy, opportunities for learning and discussion of world events are heightened.

Some students might express hate toward a large group of people. It can be helpful to validate their strong feelings of anger. However, it will be critical to help students separate thoughts and feelings about the specific people who caused the tragedy from generalizing it to larger groups of people, including their classmates and other acquaintances (e.g., all people of Arab descent). It may be helpful to have discussions about how world leaders can help with reducing hate and preventing future violent acts.

Students will often process the information about the events at unpredictable times throughout the day. As they try to develop an understanding for what has happened, they may ask questions that are initially shocking to adults, including questions that have gruesome details. Try to respond in a calm manner, answering the questions in simple, direct terms and help the students to transition back to their activity.

Students will often misunderstand the information about the event as they are trying to make sense about what happened. For example, they may blame themselves, believe things happened that did not happen, believe that terrorists are in the school, etc. Gently help students develop a realistic understanding of the event.

Students may ask the same types of questions repeatedly, which can be confusing and/or frustrating for teachers. Understand that students may need to hear the information multiple times before being able to integrate and understand it. Give students time to cope with their fears.

Expect some angry outbursts from students. Try to catch students before they "act out", taking them aside, helping them calm down and regain control of their behavior. In addition, redirect students who are being irritable with each other which could escalate to direct conflict.

Do classroom activities that will reinforce the message that one person can make a difference to help and heal. Activities can include drawing pictures and sending cards or class projects of collecting pennies or aluminum cans or making origami cranes.

Encourage some distraction times, which would include doing school work that does not require high levels of new learning and enjoyable activities. Help students do activities that allow them to experience mastery and build self-esteem.

Expect some brief (temporary) decline in students' school performance. Consider suspending standardized testing and classroom testing for the rest of the week. Also, consider reducing homework as the nation heals and the national routine is stabilized (e.g., parents are back to work, no additional threats).

Provide reassurance to students that the feelings will get smaller and easier to handle over time.

Protect students from re-exposure to frightening situations and reminders of trauma. This includes limiting teacher-to-teacher conversations about the events in front of students.

Maintain communication with other teachers, school personnel, and parents to monitor how students are coping with the demands of school, home, and community activities. Should difficulties coping with the event persist and interfere with students' functioning, consider seeking help from a mental health professional. In addition to helping those who are clearly angry or depressed, monitor students who are withdrawn and isolated from others.

Remain aware of your own reactions to students' trauma, as well as your own reactions to the trauma. It is okay to express emotions to your students, such as "I am feeling sad about what happened." However, if you are feeling overwhelmed with emotion, it is important to take care of yourself and to seek support from other teachers and staff.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS FOLLOWING TRAUMA/DISASTER

What Can I Do To Help?
Guidelines for Parents of Elementary School Students

In addition to the guidelines for teachers of elementary school students (see Teacher Guidelines), the following are ways parents can complement what is being provided in the schools.

Avoid exposing your child to reminders of the trauma. This includes limiting your child's exposure to the news and other television programs about the tragedy. If you do choose to have your child see this information on the television, keep it brief, watch it with your child, and talk to your child after to clarify miscommunication. Protecting the children from re-exposure includes limiting exposure to adult conversations about the events - even when you think they are not listening, they often are.

Maintain the family routines, particularly around sleeping, eating, and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, church, dance). Be sure the bedtime routine includes safely tucking them in at night. Young children may want a night light again. Make sure your child is receiving a balanced diet and enough rest.

Avoid unnecessary separations from important caregivers. Expect temporary regression in your child's behaviors (e.g., starting to babytalk, wetting the bed). Do not panic, as your child is likely to return to previous functioning with time and support.

Provide soothing activities, such as reading books, listening to music, taking a walk, riding bikes, etc.

Increase patience with your child and with yourself. Give your family time to cope. Find ways to emphasize to the children that you love them.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What Can I Do To Help?
Guidelines for Parents of Middle School Students

In addition to the guidelines for teachers of middle school students (see Teacher Guidelines), the following are ways parents can complement what is being provided in the schools.

Avoid exposing your child to reminders of the trauma. This includes limiting your child's exposure to the news and other television programs about the tragedy. If you do choose to have your child see this information on the television, keep it brief, watch it with your child, and talk to your child after to clarify miscommunication. Protecting the children from re-exposure includes limiting exposure to adult conversations about the events - even when you think they are not listening, they often are.

Maintain the family routines, particularly around sleeping and eating and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, church, dance). Make sure your child is receiving a balanced diet and enough rest. Extra time with friends who are supportive and meaningful to him/her may be needed.

Avoid unnecessary separations from important caregivers.

Provide soothing activities, such as reading books, listening to music, taking a walk, riding bikes, etc. Some middle school students benefit from writing their thoughts and feelings in a journal.

Address acting-out behavior involving aggression or self-destructive activities quickly and firmly with limit setting. If this behavior is severe or persists, seek professional help.

Increase patience with your child and with yourself. Give your family time to cope. Find ways to emphasize to the children that you love them.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

What Can I Do To Help?
Guidelines for Parents of High School Students

In addition to the guidelines for teachers of high school students (see Teacher Guidelines), the following are ways parents can complement what is being provided in the schools.

Avoid exposing your teen to reminders of the trauma. This includes monitoring your teen's exposure to the news and other television programs about the tragedy. When you can, watch it with your teen, and talk to your teen after to clarify their understanding of the events and the images seen. Be aware that your teens are often listening when adults are discussing the events. Protect your teen from re-exposure includes limiting exposure to adult conversations, however, find time to include them in age appropriate discussions about the events and resulting thoughts and feelings.

Maintain the family routines, particularly around sleeping and eating and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, church, dance). Make sure your teen is receiving a balanced diet and enough rest. Extra time with friends who are supportive and meaningful to him/her may be needed.

Avoid unnecessary separations from important caregivers.

Provide soothing activities, such as reading books, listening to music, taking a walk, riding bikes, etc. Some high school students benefit from writing their thoughts and feelings in a journal.

Address acting-out behavior involving aggression or self-destructive activities quickly and firmly with limit setting. If this behavior is severe or persists, seek professional help.

Encourage your teen to delay making big decisions.

Increase patience with your teen and with yourself. Give your family time to cope. Find ways to emphasize to your teen that you love them.

Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (2001).

Managing Memorials and Funeral Services

School memorials or memory activities serve an important function in the grief process for students and staff. A memorial promotes the healing process by providing an opportunity for students to join together and participate in a ritual. The memorial may take many forms, from a simple tree planting to a more traditional "service." In addition, a school memorial brings closure to a period of grieving and serves as a clear statement that it is time to move on with regular school activities. Memorials should be planned carefully considering the following guidelines:

Memorial Services

Keep the memorial **short**. Fifteen to twenty minutes for elementary students; thirty to forty minutes for secondary.

Involve students in the planning of the memorial, particularly those who were close to the deceased.

Don't cede responsibility and control for developing the service to outside interests, particularly political positions or elected leaders who are not familiar with the families and the school community. It is appropriate and valuable to have elected leaders participate in services, but their offices should not dictate speakers and/or program details.

Include music, particularly student performances. Also, play soothing music as people enter to set the mood and maintain calm.

Preview the service with students beforehand. This is not a normal assembly, so prepare students as to what will happen and how they should behave. Remove anyone from the service who is acting inappropriately.

Have several brief speakers. If students have written poems or other tributes, students themselves or staff can read samples. Readings should be practiced several times.

Invite family members. However, recognize that they may choose not to attend.

Involve all students as much as possible. To the extent that is appropriate for their age, have each class make a poster or banner that will bring to the memorial and hang on the wall.

Use symbols of life and hope. Balloons or candles can be used effectively to promote positive, uplifting messages that acknowledge the sadness yet are hopeful for the future. (Check fire codes before using candles indoors).

Give students guidance on words and/or actions that provide comfort and how to approach a grieving friend or parent.

Provide quiet activity for students who do not attend or dismiss them.

Have students return to their classrooms for a short time after the service. This allows them the opportunity to talk with one another and/or talk with a counselor. "Safe rooms" work well for students who are experiencing more significant signs of grief.

Plan the memorial to occur within a week of the death if possible.

Media Coverage of Memorial Services and Special Events

In order to allow students, staff, and parents privacy in their grief and the opportunity to focus on the service without fear of media intrusion, parameters for coverage should be set. Strategies that should be considered are as follows:

Arrange pool coverage - This allows select media outlets (usually one from each medium - TV, radio, and print) to cover the service from a designated location. Such locations are selected to provide maximum privacy and typically are at the back of the room and away from entrances and exits.

Identify members of the media at events - Communications staff should pre-approve and credential all media staff allowed to enter the service. The credential should include a press ribbon or colored badge. Once positioned in the cordoned area, media may not leave the location until approved by the communications staff.

Set guidelines for coverage - Set clear guidelines on the taking of photographs, if allowed at all. In addition, media should not be allowed to approach any attendee for an interview.

Community Crisis Response Teams

The purpose of community crisis response teams is to respond to collective trauma caused by disasters by assisting community members through crisis intervention for groups and individuals, and providing training to community caregivers in ongoing crisis intervention and post-trauma counseling skills. By helping communities reduce acute stress factors caused by the disaster and enhancing adaptive capacities of community members, communities can become stronger and better prepared to deal with future threats of harm and injury.

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) offers a variety of trainings and publications and sponsors certification for crisis responders and credentialing for victim service providers. Information about NOVA is available at www.try-nova.org/

Related Reading

The Community Crisis Response Team Training Manual, 2nd Edition by Marlene A. Young. Access at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/crt/

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Source: Rosemary Thompson, Chesapeake Public Schools, Virginia

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is in many ways a normal response to an abnormal situation. Clearly, the tragedies that occurred on September 11, 2001 were unprecedented. After a tragic event, it is likely that many will experience a variety of symptoms and emotions. Sometimes, however, these symptoms surface several weeks or months after the tragedy. This is called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Recognizing these symptoms is the first step toward recovery and finding appropriate treatment (Thompson, 1990, 1993). Symptoms include:

- Re-experiencing the event through vivid memories or flash backs
- Feeling "emotionally numb"
- Feeling overwhelmed by what would normally be considered everyday situations and diminished interest in performing normal tasks or pursuing usual interests
- Crying uncontrollably
- Isolating oneself from family and friends and avoiding social situations
- Relying increasingly on alcohol or drugs to get through the day
- Feeling extremely moody, irritable, angry, suspicious or frightened
- Having difficulty falling or staying asleep, sleeping too much and experiencing nightmares
- Feeling guilty about surviving the event or being unable to solve the problem, change the event or prevent the disaster
- Feeling fears and sense of doom about the future

Post- traumatic Loss Debriefing

Post- traumatic loss debriefing is a structured approach to understand and to manage physical and emotional responses of survivors and their loss experiences. It creates a supportive environment to process blocked communication, which often interferes with the expression of grief or feelings of guilt, and to correct distorted attitudes toward the deceased as well as to discuss ways of coping with the loss. The purpose of the debriefing is to reduce the trauma associated with the sudden loss, to initiate an adaptive grief process, and to prevent further self-destructive or self-defeating behavior. The goals are accomplished by allowing for ventilation of feelings, exploration of symbols associated with the event, and enabling mutual support.

Posttraumatic loss debriefing is composed of six stages: introductory stage, fact stage, feeling stage, reaction stage, learning stage, and closure. Posttraumatic loss debriefing is a structured approach to the management of the acute emotional upset affecting one's ability to cope emotionally, cognitively or behaviorally to the crisis situation.   Successful resolution and psychological well being is dependent upon interventions that prepare individuals for periods of stress and help survivors return to their precrisis equilibrium.

A debriefing should be organized 24 to 72 hours after the death. Natural feelings of denial and avoidance predominate during the first 24 hours. The debriefing can be offered to all persons affected by the loss. The tone must be positive, supportive, and understanding.

Stages	Purpose
Introductory Stage	This stage includes brief introductions to the debriefing process and establishment of rules for the process.
Fact Stage	This stage includes warm-up, gathering information, and recreating the event. This low initial interaction is a non-threatening warm-up and naturally leads into a discussion of feelings in the next stage. It also provides a climate to share the details about the death and to intervene to prevent secrets or rumors that may divide survivors.
Feeling Stage	This stage includes expression of feelings surrounding the event and exploration of symbols. This process allows survivors to see that subtle changes are occurring between what happened then and what is happening now.
Reaction Stage	This stage includes explanation of cognitive and physical reactions and ramifications of the stress response. Typical anxiety reactions are a sense of dread, fear of losing control, or the inability to focus or to concentrate.
Learning Stage	This stage includes the understanding of posttraumatic stress reactions to loss. It is designed to assist survivors in learning new coping skills to deal with their grief reactions. This stage also serves as a primary prevention component for future self-defeating or self-destructive behaviors.
Closure Stage	The closure stage includes wrap-up of loose ends, questions and answers, final reassurances, action planning, referrals, and follow-up.

V. Training for Preparedness

A crisis management plan cannot be implemented properly unless staff members know what the plan is and what is expected of them in the event of an emergency. In addition to staff training, it is important for students to know (and practice) emergency procedures. School-based training should be provided to all personnel, including instructional, custodial, and food service employees, temporary employees and volunteers. Inviting parent leaders (PTA officers, for example) should be considered; they have important roles in communicating with other parents and in helping restore equilibrium in the event of a major crisis. The training should include practice scenarios; examples of scenarios and a sample agenda are included in this chapter. A mock disaster drill coordinated with local emergency preparedness groups may also be conducted.

Training and in-service activities should be designed to meet three distinct needs:

1. How to prevent certain types of emergencies;
2. How to respond when emergencies occur; and,
3. How to deal with the aftermath of an emergency.

Initial training should focus on an awareness of the school division and individual school's crisis management plans including various roles and responsibilities. Staff members need to understand what they can reasonably be expected to do and what they can reasonably be expected not to do; some discussion of issues of confidentiality and liability may be needed. Training typically includes a review of procedures for the management of specific types of crises, including use of emergency kits and equipment, and practice opportunities. The impact of crises on children and adults as well as helpful strategies to use in postvention are critical to include in the training.

Training for Crisis Response Team Members needs to be extensive and in-depth. A list of essential content and sample agenda are provided below:

Essential Content for Training Crisis Team Members and Preparing the School's Plan

1. Crisis definition and theory.

2. Types of school crises.

3. Childhood reactions to crisis by ages with the most common reactions being worry about the future, decline in school performance, regression in behavior and problem sleeping.

4. Children's developmental stages of the understanding of death.

5. Importance of giving everyone the facts to dispel rumors.

6. Permission for a wide range of emotions and providing everyone the opportunity to tell their story.

7. Each individual has his own unique history of loss and unresolved issues may resurface.

8. Severity of crisis response is affected by event intensity, duration, and the victim's stability.

9. Provide emotional support as soon as possible and keep staff and students together who have experienced a crisis.

10. Keep the school open and have it viewed as source of support.

11. Children are more resilient than adults, but they still need help.

12. Mental health workers must seek out those that need their help after a crisis.

13. Parent meetings are a very effective way to assist children by helping parents to understand the typical childhood reaction to a crisis and to help parents respond with patience, love, tolerance, and support.

14. Crisis team members should meet frequently to evaluate progress of crisis management.

15. A checklist of crisis steps should be developed to guide the team's actions.

16. A calling tree should be developed to enable the administrator to alert school personnel to a crisis so that they can begin planning.

17. Policies and procedures (including memoranda of understanding) need to be developed which ensure a close working relationship with the local police and judicial authorities.

18. Clarify communication issues such as who calls the superintendent and other school personnel who need to know about the crisis.

19. Conduct crisis team meetings to process and review crisis team activities with emphasis on how to prevent or better manage crisis events.

SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA FOR CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

I.   Introduction

II.   Development of School-Site Crisis Management Plan

   A. Managing crisis
         1. Preparation – before it happens
         2. Crisis response – when it happens
         3. Follow-up – postvention
         4. Delegating

   B. Communities
         1. Rumor-control within the school
         2. Media procedures
         3. Communication with parents and community

   C. Managing grief and loss
         1. Stages of grief
         2. First of 48 hrs.
         3. Memorials, anniversaries planning

   D. Legal issues
         1. In loco parentis
         2. Confidentiality
         3. Negligence/liability issues

   E. Taking care of caretakers
         1. Helping staff personally manage crisis
         2. Self-care for team members

   F. Community support and referrals
         1. Identifying community support resources
         2. Establishing and maintaining community linkages

III.   Crisis Responses

   A. Suicide
         1. Review of crisis response for suicide
         2. Prevention of 'cluster' effect
               a. Myths and facts; warning signs
               b. Identifying those at-risk
               c. Procedure for intervention with potentially suicidal
                    student
         3. Follow-up activities

   B. Other deaths – Review of crisis response and follow-up for each
         1. Accidental/sudden death of student or staff member
         2. Homicide
         3. Anticipated death (following illness, declining health)

C. Critical incidents at school – shooting, stabbing, weapons, intruder.
    1. Review of crisis responses for each
    2. Interface with local law enforcement
    3. Review of possible follow-up activities

D. Critical incidents (not at school) – rape, arrests, accidents, hate crimes of racial tensions
    1. Review of crisis responses
    2. Communication with involved authorities
    3. Review of possible follow-up activities

E. Natural disaster – Floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes
    1. Review of crisis responses for each
    2. Interface with local disaster relief agencies
    3. Review of possible follow-up activities

IV. **Community Support Services**

A. Emergency Assistance
    1. Public Safety Agencies (fire, police, emergency)
    2. Mental health
    3. Shelter/housing
    4. Food/clothing
    5. Emergency Family Services
    6. Disaster relief
    7. Medical services

B. Counseling Services (nonprofit and community agencies)

C. Health Services/Clinics
    1. Medical and dental
    2. Substance abuse and Psychiatric

D. Hotlines
    1. Crisis
    2. Suicide
    3. Rape
    4. Child abuse (including sexual abuse)
    5. Crime
    6. Other community hotlines

E. Self-help
    1. Alcoholics Anonymous
    2. Ala-Anon/Ala-teen
    3. Parent support
    4. Other self-help

F. Bilingual/Refugee Resources
    1. Translators

Sample Initial Training Agenda For School All-Staff Training

I. Introductory background on development of School Crisis Management Plan

II.   School Crisis Management Plan

    A. Purpose of Plan
    B. Overview of Plan
    C. General review of roles and responsibilities

III.   Typical impacts of crises

    A. Shock; stages of grief
    B. Restoring equilibrium
        1. Importance of first 48 hours
        2. Postvention

IV.   Communications

    A. Confidentiality
    B. Rumor-control within the school
    C. Communication outside school
        1. With media
        2. With parents and community groups

V.   Dealing with specific types of crises

    A. Review of general procedures in the case of a suicide
        1. Practice scenario
    B. Review of general procedures in the case of accidental death
        1. Practice scenario
    C. Review of general procedures in the case homicide
        1. Practice scenario
    D. Review of general procedures in the case of natural disaster
        1. Practice scenario
    E. Review of general procedures in the case of bus accident
        1. Practice scenario
    F.   Select additional incidents/scenarios appropriate for school

Closing discussion and questions

Key Elements of Training

Successful crisis intervention models must include staff development that focuses on both content and team process. Our regional team developed a full-day workshop that incorporates both of these key elements.

Content-level training begins with an overview of crisis theory and its implications in a school setting. We make a distinction between the kinds of events that affect an entire school community and crises in individuals' lives (for example, child abuse) that are not appropriate for crisis team response. The training then reviews concepts of grief and loss, placing them in a developmental context that reviews children's understanding of death at different ages (Schonfeld 1993). The inservice program next focuses on responses needed for particular kinds of rises, such as suicide or homicide.

The training emphasizes ***team building*** in the latter half of the day. Small-group exercises involving a hypothetical crisis enable team members to apply the model and to assume specific team roles. They also discuss situations that have no correct response—such as how much information to give students about a suicide when the story breaks just before the close of school for a weekend. The vignette helps staff consider these kinds of questions proactively and resolve them as a team.

Content and process are blended in the final segment of the training, when a panel of local school personnel discusses crisis situations they have encountered firsthand.

Scenarios for Use in Training

For each scenario, identify key issues and formulate a preliminary action plan.

Crisis Response Scenarios

- A seven-year-old boy playing near a stairwell falls two stories inside the school. Classmates witness it. The child, seriously injured, is taken to the hospital by paramedics. Students are scheduled to be dismissed in 20 minutes.

- A 12th grade student driving home after a football game one Friday night fails to stop at an intersection and the accident results in the death of a classmate's mother. It is rumored that the boy was drinking.

- A student at your school has contracted meningitis and is hospitalized in critical condition. Health Department authorities have initiated procedures for immunization of classmates. There are untrue rumors that a cafeteria worker who coincidentally was hospitalized the same day is a carrier.

- A parent who has brought her child to school reports to the office that a house in the neighborhood caught fire early that morning and there were fatalities but she does not know who. The house is that of two students at the school.

- A bus carrying elementary students home one afternoon stops at an intersection where students looking out the bus see a young male shot in a drive-by shooting. The young man is a cousin of a student on the bus.

- It is a rainy Tuesday morning and, nearby, a truck has overturned releasing toxic fumes. The Fire Department has just ordered that your 600-student elementary school be evacuated immediately.

- You hear on the 11 PM news on a Sunday night that a 10th grade girl at your school is reported missing; she was not home when parents came home from a weekend trip. Minutes after the broadcast a staff member calls and reports that there are rumors that foul play is suspected. You know that she and her boyfriend who is a senior had a loud fight in front of many students on Friday afternoon as buses were loading.

- You are notified by police at 5:30 AM that a very popular teacher at your middle school commits suicide, leaving behind a husband and two children, one of whom attends your school.

- At a basketball tournament in a nearby city a member of the team collapses. Because of media coverage of the tournament, information about the incident is already being broadcast. The school has just been notified that the student died, but the family has not yet been reached. Students, including the student's sister, who have heard it on the radio are coming to the office to ask what has happened.

- You have just received a call from central office that there is a tornado warning for the part of the county in which your middle school is located. There are 10 portable classrooms; 2 classes in the gymnasium, 1 class coming off the baseball field, and busload of 5th graders arriving from the feeder school for an orientation visit.

For Suicide-Related Scenarios . . .

See **Suicide Prevention Guidelines** (1999), Virginia Board of Education. Access at www.pen.k12.va.us

Planning Steps for School Crisis Drills

1. Utilize a tabletop simulation where the crisis team is presented with five possible crisis situations and each team member records their hypothetical response.

2. Team members discuss their anticipated responses and select one scenario to simulate each semester with precautions taken to not unduly alarm staff and students.

3. It is important to inform the public of the need for crisis planning and the conduction of drills.

4. Avoid the use of dramatic props such as starter pistols and simulated blood.

5. Place a sign in the area where drills are to be conducted clearly designating that a drill is taking place and let all relevant agencies know in advance that it is a drill.

6. Practice drills that do involve moving staff and students to a safe location.

7. An objective staff member from another building of the central office should observe the drill and give feedback to the crisis team.

8. The crisis team should meet and review their activities with the emphasis placed on continual improvement.

International Association of Chiefs of Police Training Recommendations

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recommends the following school crisis management training practices:

1. Test crisis management plans with faculty and staff and, if appropriate, with selected students, at the beginning of each school year and/or during in-service days throughout the year. Law enforcement and emergency services agencies in the community should be included.

2. Coordinate and regularly hold scenario-based training sessions that bring together law enforcement, other emergency response personnel, school personnel and others.

3. Train teachers and other staff on the types of information that emergency response personnel will need to respond to different types of crises, such as when the event occurred, where it happened, how many are involved, whether lockdown or evacuation has occurred.

4. Consider using local emergency response personnel or division-wide crisis teams to provide training.

5. To the extent possible, provide cross-training to members of the Crisis Management Team and to other school personnel.

6. Review the crisis response plan with teachers, principals, staff, volunteers, campus supervisors, and school resource officers.

7. Review crisis response plan with students.

8. Provide training to teachers and school staff on their assigned, and if applicable, back-up roles during crisis situations.

9. Supplement verbal training with a written pamphlet to remind students, as well as full-time, part-time, intern, and substitute teachers of their specified roles.

10. On an ongoing basis, provide training to staff; volunteers; full-time, part-time, intern, and substitute teachers; other persons who are regularly on campus regarding how to respond to different types of crisis scenarios.

11. Develop written summaries of crisis response instructions to be disseminated to new substitutes along with their specific classroom materials.

12. Provide information to parents/guardians on their roles during crisis situations. Also inform them where they should go to meet with the designated spokespersons, where to retrieve their children and get

information about the status of the crisis, and what they can do to help during and after the crisis.

13. Decide on an appropriate balance of crisis response information and crisis response drills for students that leaves them feeling safe without causing undue fear.

14. Provide training in media relations for appointed media spokespersons during the planning phase. Invite media representatives to those training sessions to strengthen relationships and enhance understanding of their respective needs.

15. Provide information to local media representatives on how to receive and communicate information about crises to the community.

16. Teach students, teachers, and staff to recognize the physiological cues experienced in crisis situations. Rehearse constructive skills and behaviors instead of relying on impulsive actions during crisis situations.

17. Provide emergency first-aid training to teachers, staff, and students.

18. Provide staff, teachers, and students with instructions on personal safety awareness and survival skills, on how to report and respond to persons making threats or displaying weapons, and about locating and not giving up safe positions.

19. Incorporate crisis preparation training and requirements into teacher education programs at colleges and universities.

 Related Reading

Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence **(1999). International Association of Chiefs of Police. Access at www.theiacp.org**

VI. Communications

Communication is a critical part of crisis management. School staff members and students must be told what is happening and what to do. Parents of students and families of staff members must be informed about the situation, including the status of their child or family member. Timely contact with law enforcement and other emergency services is necessary for effective response. School Board members must be kept informed and updated information must be transmitted to central office and to other affected schools. The presentations must be informed and kept updated. Additionally, groups which are a part of the school community (PTA, advisory councils, etc.) and can assist with getting accurate information into the community are important. This chapter focuses on communication — within the school and school division, with parents and the community, and with the media.

Communications Basics

When a school crisis event occurs, the key communication tasks involve:

- notifying faculty and staff of known facts of the event and what first steps they are to take;
- keeping faculty and staff informed as additional information becomes available and response plans evolve;
- engage appropriate community resources to assist in restoring equilibrium and recovery;
- providing students with accurate information, countering rumors and mis-information;
- providing parents with accurate information about the event, the school's response, and suggestions and resources for appropriate response; and
- as appropriate, provide media with accurate information about the event and the school's response.

When a critical incident occurs, key communication tasks may become far more complex. First, key information should have already been assembled for use by emergency responders. See Section IV for a critical incident information inventory. In major crisis events a wide range of communications tasks must be undertaken. Crisis Communications Team tasks identified in the National Education Association Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit are described below. Note that all the functions may be carried out by a single individual, particularly in smaller school divisions.

Crisis Communications Team Tasks

Spokesperson - Serves as the official source of all official school division information. This person addresses reporters at all scheduled press briefings; provides all official comments for press attribution; manages strategic message development; and counsels top administrators.

Media Coordinator - Manages media queries, including prioritizing requests according to deadlines, type of request, and whether or not it is from a local or national outlet. Local should get first priority as they are often part of the school community and will be covering the event long after the national media leave. This person identifies opportunities to promote the school message and anticipates the direction media queries will take so the district can prepare and respond.

Information-Communications Coordinator - Manages information flow. This person seeks out and organizes information updates, such as the time and place for community meetings, hotline phone numbers, instructions for donations, and press briefing schedules and channels it to internal and external audiences. Internal channels include district staff e-mail groups, listservers, blast faxes, and school voicemail. External channels include the media, parents, and the broader public. This person also develops and maintains the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document - a recording of questions fielded by phone bank volunteers and their answers. He or she also maintains the master schedule - a document containing all scheduled meetings and events for the day. The schedule is usually blown up to poster size and placed prominently for phone bank volunteers to reference. The information-communications coordinator also updates and compiles the daily fact sheet - a listing of all significant messages for the day and the source of information on a broad array of topics and provides sign off for distribution.

Media Monitor and Research Director - Monitors media coverage and seeks to correct inaccuracies. The media monitor provides summaries of coverage for all outlets for the spokesperson. The media monitor and research director is also responsible for maintaining research files.

Clerical and Systems Operations Coordinator - Oversees all distribution systems, including e-mail and fax for external and internal audiences. This person establishes a routine procedure for ensuring appropriate proofreading, signoff and quick delivery of information products. He or she is responsible for systems operation including programming fax machines, assigning and coordinating copy jobs, and distributing fact sheets to media and other external and internal audiences.

Liaison to Law Enforcement Agencies' Public Information Officers - Ensures that law enforcement representatives receive all communication products produced by the division office and attends briefings for updated information on anticipated press briefings and announcements. He or she provides regular updates and

reports for spokespersons. The information obtained from law enforcement may influence school division communication and message development.

Liaison to Victims' Families and Counseling Units - Ensures that victims' advocates and victims' families receive all communication products from the school division communications office. He or she also obtains information on the concerns and needs of the victims and provides regular updates and reports to the spokesperson. The information obtained from the victims' liaison plays a major role in shaping the division's communication direction and message development.

Computer Systems, Web Page Technician - Oversees maintenance and operation of the communication operation's computer network; backs up files at the end of the day; and posts all new and approved communication products for the web page. He or she creates an avenue for answering e-mail queries and facilitates bulletin boards or chat rooms.

Volunteer Coordinator - Oversees all volunteer activity, including recruiting, training and scheduling volunteers to staff media query phone bank, coordinate special events, undertake writing projects, and act as a media escort. He or she prepares briefing folders for new volunteers, including daily fact sheets, key messages, telephone numbers, and web site addresses.

Liaison to Elected Officials and Manager of Special Events - Ensures that elected officials and community group leaders are informed of all division communication activity. Also coordinates elected officials' roles in memorial services, creating memorials, and other special events and provides a communication channel between elected leaders and district administration. This liaison is sensitive to the perceptions and reality of action that could potentially be considered political and advocates on behalf of school community needs.

Donations Coordinator - Implements systems to collect and distribute donations and woks with the information coordinator to communicate needs and educate the public about how donations are being used. This is usually someone with business and political connections who can quickly marshal resources, such as storage space or equipment.

Related Reading

Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit, National Education Association Washington, DC **Access at www.nea.org/crisis/**

Challenges and Suggested Responses

Challenge	Response
Day One	
<u>Rumor Control</u> A common reaction to fear is to generate rumors or stories to fill in information that is not available. Making an uninformed declaration about information can be empowering for frightened individuals. Crises are fertile ground for rumors, and rumors are unfortunately self-perpetuating.	Clear and frequent communication. Crisis communicators should be involved, visible, and convey leadership. Survivors, victims' families, and local citizens will look to the school for leadership. Its presence will help calm fears and rumor mongering.
<u>Phone Line Jams</u> Natural disasters and major newsmaking events can create massive phone traffic, jamming cellular connections.	Use combination two-way radio/cell phones and if possible keep one line open to the district office. If a connection is made, don't hang up, just put the phone down for use later.
<u>Media Intrusion</u> School crises can create a crush of media, often making it hard to distinguish parents and students from journalists. Helicopters and cameras stationed outside the school provide live coverage that can put many lives at risk.	Determine and maintain a perimeter around the school that media may not cross. Ask for law enforcement help in policing violators. Violators may later be denied access to official school or law enforcement briefings.
<u>Scattering of Schools and School Staff</u> Acting on instinct, staff and students facing danger flee the building, often not knowing where they are running. This makes it difficult to ensure that students are moving toward safety, not danger, and makes it difficult to account for students and staff. Parents who come to school often cannot find their children and panic ensues. Natural disasters can disperse children, families, and entire communities. Recent disasters have spawned effective people (and even pet) locator systems that often involve Internet communication.	Establish pre-identified locations (reunion areas) that students and staff should retreat to in the event of an emergency. Ensure that a procedure has been established for releasing students to parent or guarding care; the procedure should be able to account for when and into whose custody the child was released. Provide information about dispersed colleagues and students.
<u>Media Mistakes</u> Fact verification. In the absence of information and the pressure of live coverage, verification of facts is often sacrificed for good pictures and sound.	Establish trust before the crisis strikes. Provide as much information as you can as quickly as you can without speculating or releasing unverified information. Even if all you can say are a few sketchy sentences, you can communicate your concern and compassion and the action being taken to investigate. Advise media of the potential destructiveness of being wrong.
Day Two	
<u>Potential for Eroded Credibility</u> When bad things happen, past behavior is used to predict future actions. When past behaviors are considered good and helpful, the current and future behaviors don't match those expectations, there is a loss of credibility.	Implement trust-building, fear-reducing, credibility-fixing behaviors. Suggestions: ■ Provide advance information. ■ Ask for input from all, even perceived opponents. ■ Listen carefully. ■ Demonstrate you've heard, adjust action. ■ Stay in touch.

Challenge	Response
	▪ Speak in plain language. ▪ Bring victims/involuntary participants into the decisionmaking process.
<u>Constant Need for Information</u> The need for a constant streaming of information to the community is enormous. Questions and anxieties can escalate.	Organize separate all-school staff and all-community meetings to provide information and opportunity to express concerns. Immediately implement information channels that are accessible to all members of the community and media -- an interactive web site for questions and answers, a crisis response hotline, and a regularly updated fact sheet.
<u>Panic and Alienation</u> Normal routines and support systems are suspended and survivors can feel very alone and panicked.	Drop-in centers should be made available in several locations throughout the community for parents, students, teachers and others to receive information, counseling, and contact with other grieving members of the school and community.
<u>Media Feeding Frenzies</u> Reporters are scrambling for pictures of students, interviews with school staff and students, and sometimes implement specious means of gaining access to schools and hospitals.	Implement a system for coordinating and responding to media and set parameters for coverage.
Day Three and Beyond	
<u>Community Feelings - Bitterness and Blame</u> Victims and victims' families and the school community may feel bitter and may take action that causes divisiveness. There may also be a tendency to place blame or emphasize simplistic solutions to violence or community crisis.	Care must be taken to sustain open, responsive communication lines with all facets of the school community, particularly the victims and their families. Liaisons to victims should make frequent contact with the families and be responsive to their concerns and needs. In addition, affirming community-wide activities should be scheduled to allow citizens to contribute to memorials and expressions of compassion.
<u>Victims' Feelings - Anxiety, Frustration, Anger</u> Victims (of varying degrees) declare their needs are not being met or considered and resist solutions.	Promote the understanding that victims have a special mentality and their perception and behavior is altered in ways that are fundamentally predictable. Victims designate themselves and determine when they are not longer victims.
<u>Anxiety and Media Interest in Return to School</u> Anxieties escalate around returning to school. There is a heightened media interest in covering the first day back.	Establish drop-in support groups within school during lunch hour and before and after school. Carefully plan re-entry and make adequate counseling support available. Communicate well first day plans and set limits with the media.

Adapted from National Education Association <u>Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit</u>. Access at www.nea.org/crisis

School Communications

When a school crisis has occurred notifying faculty and staff of an event or crisis and keeping them informed as additional information becomes available and as plans for management of the situation evolve is critical. Some practices which school administrators have found to be helpful include the following:

The Telephone Tree
A telephone tree is a simple, widely used system for notifying staff of a crisis event when they are not at school. A very carefully crafted statement, specifying what is and is not yet known, should be drafted before the telephone tree is activated.

The Morning Faculty Meeting
An early, brief faculty meeting provides the opportunity to give accurate, updated information about the crisis event/situation itself and to review with staff procedures for the day, including the availability of intervention resources.

The End-of-Day One Faculty Meeting
A brief end-of-day one meeting provides the opportunity to review day one, update information, and plan for day two. Misinformation or rumors can be addressed before staff members go home or into the community where they are likely to be asked about the situation.

Simple Telephone Tree

Once it is verified that a crisis exists, the building administrator or designee sets the phone tree in motion. When a crisis occurs during weekends, vacation periods, or when a large number of staff is away from school, it will be necessary to transmit information via a phone tree. At other times, when crises occur when school is in session, only the people outside the school building need to be contacted via telephone.

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  Administrator,  │
                        │    designee      │
                        └──────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Public Safety    │ │  Crisis Team     │ │ Media Contact,   │
│ Contact, as      │ │  Coordinator     │ │ as appropriate   │
│ appropriate      │ │                  │ │                  │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ Crisis Team  │ │ Crisis Team  │ │ Crisis Team  │
│ Member       │ │ Member       │ │ Member       │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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Staff Contact	Staff Contact	Staff Contact	Feeder School	Feeder School	Community Resource #1	Community Resource #2	Parent Commun-icators
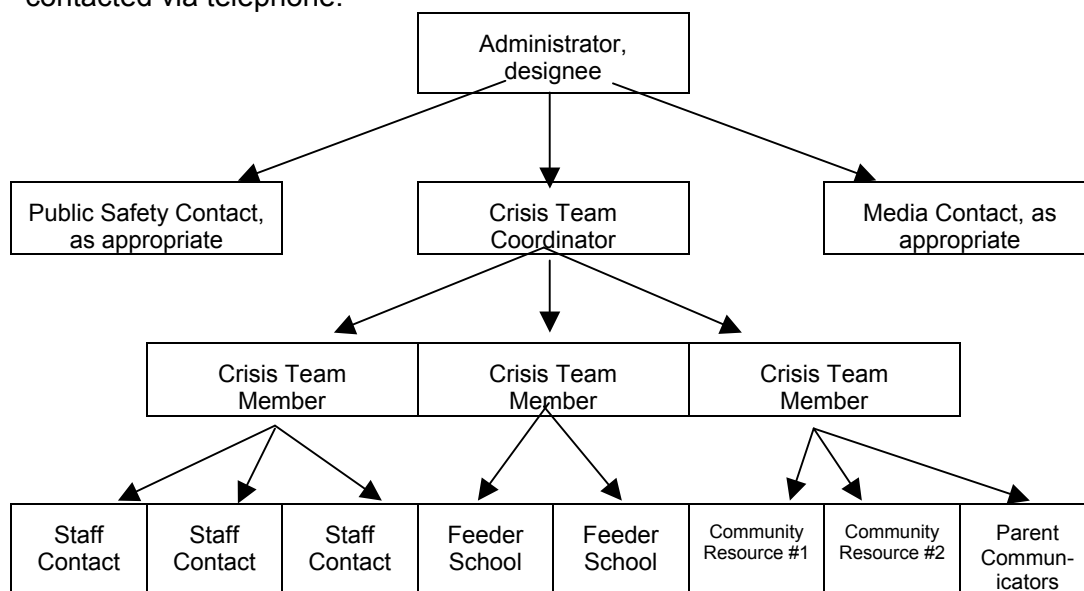
The crisis response telephone tree should include <u>all staff</u> -- including cooks, bus drivers, custodians, and other support staff -- and should be reviewed each year with all staff.

Making the Calls

- Begin with a statement such as, "I'm sorry to have to call with bad news. . ." or "due to the impending storm . . ."
- Ask the person to get paper and pencil to write specifics if they will be calling another person.
- Give facts about the event, identifying critical information needs: what happened, who is okay and who is hurt; action to be taken to respond, and how to help and get help.
- Notify them of upcoming all-staff meeting and note that further details will be available at the meeting.
- Remind them not to speculate in their phone tree calls -- that they should just pass on essential information.

Dealing with Rumors

Establishing reliable communications networks is critical for dealing effectively with a potentially detrimental phenomenon always present in crises: rumors. People are going to talk about an emergency and, when accurate information is not available, rumors begin. Without facts, people begin to speculate and the speculations soon come to be thought of as "facts." Left unchecked, rumors can become more difficult to deal with than the crisis event. They may create a negative perception of the school's ability to manage an emergency or, even worse, a belief that the school cannot provide for the safety and well-being of the children. The most effective strategy for combating rumors is to provide <u>facts</u> as soon as possible. Some strategies which may be helpful include the following:

1. Identify and notify <u>internal</u> groups including administrators, teachers, students, custodians, secretaries, teaching assistants, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers. These people are primary sources of information and are likely to be contacted in their neighborhoods, at grocery stores, etc. It is critical that they have accurate information because what they know (or don't know and are speculating about) will be passed on. A faculty/staff meeting should be held before staff members are allowed to go home so that what is (and is not) known can be clearly communicated.

2. Clerical staff who answer the telephone at the school and at the central office must know which information can be shared and which information cannot be shared. They must be kept informed of inaccurate information which is circulating so they can help "correct" misinformation. Designating a few persons to answer calls helps control the circulating of misinformation.

3. Use of key communicators in the community will also combat rumors. A telephone tree or a briefing held especially for identified community representatives directly associated with the school will help spread accurate information.

4. The media can also help control rumors; ask them to provide frequent updates to the public, particularly providing accurate information where rumors need to be dispelled.

5. After the immediately crisis has passed, public meetings may be helpful. It provides an opportunity for people to ask questions and to receive accurate information. A follow-up public meeting may also be helpful in restoring the community's confidence in the school's ability to manage crises and to provide a safe environment.

Using Technology for Communication

Technology can be a very effective tool for communication during a crisis. Some common tools that may be used include the following:

Telephone. Although the telephone is the most commonly used communications tool in schools, most schools do not have enough lines and, worse, service is typically lost when electricity is lost. In preparing for crises it is recommended that:

- Schools should have at least one secure line with an unpublished number.
- The telephone company should be consulted in pre-planning; there may be unused lines in the school's control panel which can be activated if needed.
- Use standard jacks and mark them clearly so emergency service personnel can find them. The school floor plan which is part of the school's "emergency toolkit" should have the location of jacks marked clearly.

Intercom systems. Most schools have such a system; systems which include teacher-initiated communications with the office and use a handset rather than a wall-mounted speaker are most useful in an emergency. Instructions for use of the intercom system should be posted near the controls in the office area. Additionally, students should be taught to use the intercom system – the teacher may have a medical emergency or be otherwise unable to operate the system

Bullhorns and megaphones. Often used at pep rallies and field days, battery-powered bullhorns or megaphones can also be very effective tools for communication in an emergency and should be a part of the school's "emergency toolbox." Procedures governing storage of the bullhorn in the office closet in the gym may not be an option. If one is not available (or out of batteries!) at the school, law enforcement vehicles are sometimes equipped with speakers Β another good reason to include law enforcement in the pre-planning process.

Two-Way Radios. Routinely used in many schools, two-way radios provide a reliable method of communication between rooms and buildings at a single site. There are combination radio/cell phone units now available. All staff need to know how to operate the walkie-talkie (even those who don╪ routinely carry them).

Computer telecommunications.   A relatively new tool, the potential capability of existing computers to be used for communication both within the school and to other sites needs to be assessed as part of the pre-planning process. E-mail or electronic bulletin boards may be a useful tool for updating information for staff,

central office, other schools in the affected area, and possibly for other community agencies.

Web Pages. The Internet can be a powerful tool for sharing facts and information. From posting daily fact sheets to putting up lists of contact and support numbers to giving survivors a place to post their thoughts and feelings, a web page can be a critical part of the school's information dissemination and support functions.

Fax machines. The fax machine is a potentially valuable tool for both sending and receiving information in an emergency. In the case of off-campus accidents, for example, lists of students and staff members involved, their locations, and needed telephone numbers can be quickly and accurately communicated. Medical information, release forms, and medical authorizations can be faxed, signed, and returned in emergencies.

Cellular telephones. Increasingly available and affordable, the role of cellular telephones as a communications tool needs to be carefully assessed. They may be the only tool working when electric service is out and are particularly useful as a link to staff members who may be en route to or from the site of an accident or other emergency. They are increasingly being used to link the multiple vehicles transporting students and staff on off-campus trips.

"Panic buttons." Some schools have installed "panic buttons" connected directly to the police or other emergency services. In some communities, there is an immediate response; in others, the police or fire department call the school to confirm the emergency.

Alarm systems - Bells or buzzers may be sounded in different ways to signal different types of emergencies, for example, fire, tornado, or special alert (with instructions to follow).

Related Reading

<u>The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools.</u> National Institute of Justice, 1999. Access at www.ncjrs.org/school/178265.pdf

SAMPLE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CRISIS EVENT

Source: Association of California School Administrators, 1995

TO:
FROM:

"We have just been advised of a tragedy involving a member(s) of our school. I am sad to announce that _____ has died/has been in a serious accident. As soon as we have more information, we will pass it on to you. People will be available in the building to help those of you who need extra support in dealing with this situation. Your teachers will advise you of the location and times available for this support.

"As soon as we know the family's/families' wishes regarding _____ we will share that information with you. We ask that all students remain in their classrooms and adhere to their regular schedules."

SAMPLE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: ANNOUNCEMENT OF A STUDENT SUICIDE

To be read to the students by the classroom teacher.

TO: School Faculty
FROM: Principal
SUBJECT: (Crisis)
DATE:

John Doe committed suicide early Saturday morning. As a faculty we extend our sympathy to John's family and friends.

We encourage all students to consider the tragic nature of this death and to realize that death is final. John's death is a reminder to us all that the act of taking one's life is not an appropriate solution to any of life's problems nor is it an act of courage. Please let your teachers know if you would like to talk to a counselor or other staff member.

Funeral services for John will be held in _____ and there will not be a memorial service in this area. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to (name and address).

Communications with Parents and the Community At Large

A very important aspect of managing crises is dealing effectively with parent reactions. ***Communication with parents and the community is best begun <u>before</u> a crisis occurs***. Some useful strategies include the following:

1. Educate parents about the school crisis plan, its objectives, and the need for it. Such information can be included in the school handout or other informational materials prepared for parents, at parent orientations, or at other informational meetings.

2. Develop a relationship with parents so that they trust and feel comfortable calling school personnel in the event of crisis.

Develop materials that may be needed including:

- Draft formats of letters to parents informing them of what happened, how the school and school division are handling the situation, and information on possible reactions of their child and suggested ways to talk with them.

- Develop a list of community resources that may be helpful to parents.

- Identify parents who are willing to volunteer in case of an emergency, include them in preparation efforts, and include them in training.

Parent Information Needs

In the event of an emergency parents have very specific information needs.

First, parents want to know their child is safe; then, parents want to know the details of the emergency situation, to know how it was handled, and to know that their children will be safe in the future. The first reactions are likely to involve fear. Upon learning of an incident at the school, parents are likely to descend upon the school in search of their child or to telephone, frantically seeking information. Establishing a system for responding quickly to parent needs for information is an important part of pre-planning. Anger is another common reaction of parents, particularly in the case of senseless acts of violence. In the event of a crisis or disaster:

1. Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened. Do not embellish or speculate.

2. Implement the plan to manage phone calls and parents who arrive at school.

3. Schedule and attend an open question-and-answer meeting for parents as soon after the incident as possible. The meeting is an opportunity for school officials to listen and respond to parent concerns (which is helpful in combating rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the school. In the event of an incident which involved damage or destruction, an open house for parents and other members of the community to see the school restored to its "normal" state helps everyone get beyond the crisis.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR PARENT COMMUNICATION RE: EMERGENCY PICK-UP

Parent Procedures for Picking up Children in an Emergency

In a letter or as part of the school parent handbook, the school should inform parents, in writing, about the proper procedures to follow in picking up a child/children in an emergency situation requiring a shut-down or evacuation of the school. It is assumed that bus transportation will be provided; however, many parents will want to pick up their children and the provisions listed below apply to such situations.

Among the types of information that might be contained in the letter are:

- Emphasize that school is one of the safest places that students may be located during most crises or natural disasters.

- Assurance that emergency procedures have been established. Include a general description of the procedures.

- Assurance that students will be kept at school until the crisis is determined to be over. For example, a chemical spill may delay student release when there is risk of exposure.

- Notification that under certain circumstances students may be evacuated to another site. An explanation of how parents will be notified or ways that they will be able to find out where their child is.

- A request to NOT telephone the school and tie-up the few telephone lines that will be needed for emergency use. (Where capabilities exist, status reports might be posted on the school or school division website).

- Notification that students will be released to parents who come to get them and a reminder of procedures for release to other authorized parties.

SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION: STUDENT DEATH

Unexpected student death – elementary
(adapted from letter developed by Chesapeake City Public Schools, Virginia)

Dear Parents,

Yesterday, we learned that one of our first graders, _____, died while in the hospital. _____ had his tonsils removed over the past weekend. Complications set in after his parents took him home and he was taken back to the hospital where he died yesterday afternoon.

Today, at school, each teacher read a short message about _____ to his/her class. We discussed what happened and how _____ died. We also stressed that many people have their tonsils out every day and have no problems with it. Our guidance counselor and our school psychologist were available throughout the day to talk with any student that may have had a particularly difficult time dealing with the news.

Any death is difficult for children to understand. _____'s death is particularly difficult due to his young age and its unexpectedness. The fact that _____ died while at the hospital and the fact that it was related to having his tonsils out may also be frightening for children, especially those who may need to have their own tonsils out in the future.

We recommend that you take some to discuss _____'s death with your child. We suggest allowing your child to talk about how he/she feels and any fears or concerns he/she may have as a result of hearing this news. We are enclosing a list of suggestions to help you talk with your child about _____'s death and/or the death of any loved one.

If you feel that your child would benefit from talking with our guidance counselor or our school psychologist, please call us at the school and share your concerns.

The faculty, staff and students extend our heartfelt sympathies to the _____ family and to all their friends. We at the school will miss _____ very much. He was our friend and we loved him.

Sincerely,
School Principal

SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION: BUS ACCIDENT

Bus Accident
(adapted from letters developed by Chesapeake City and Hanover County Public Schools, Virginia)

Dear Parents,

This morning, prior to school, there was an accident involving a school bus and an automobile. There were known injuries to the passengers of the car. The children on Bus # _____ witnessed the aftermath of the accident, but were not involved in it.

The children from the bus involved in the accident were taken to the library by the guidance counselors and administration. The children were asked if they were injured in any way and their parents were then contacted. Your child, because of being on Bus # _____ may show delayed reaction to the accident. Please be alert over the next several days to symptoms of delayed reaction, including:

- a desire to be alone, unusually quiet
- loss of appetite
- problems with sleeping, nightmares
- difficulty with concentration
- crying
- angry outburst, short temper
- headaches, upset stomach

Your child may also exhibit some physical complaints. Please contact (principal's name) to fill out an accident report. The school will be offered support services for students needing help dealing with the accident. We will also provide counseling services to parents in helping their children to cope. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. (Give school phone number.)

Sincerely,

Principal of School

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS REGARDING SCHOOL EVACUATION

Date Released:
Time Released:
Released by:

Because of the incident at (School Name Here), the students, faculty and staff have been evacuated to an alternate location as a preliminary measure.

(School Name Here) has been relocated to (New Location Name Here).

(Repeat this information for as many schools as may be involved.)

Parents are instructed to pick up their children at the alternate location. Do not attempt to pick up children at their regular school. Please meet your child at the alternate location. All other schools and school facilities are unaffected. Parents and citizens are urged not to interfere in the operation of those schools by calling on the telephone or by personal visits. Your cooperation in this matter is expected and appreciated.

(Repeat this message once, then follow with any other official message.)

Communications with Media

General Guidelines

Media policy varies from one school system to another. Contact is generally channeled through one person. Most news people are sensitive, open to suggestions and interested in doing a reputable job. When dealing with the media, the following suggestions will promote clear communications:

- Deal up-front with reporters. Be honest, forthright and establish good communication with the media before problems or a crisis occurs.

- Do not try to stonewall the media or keep them from doing their job.

- The school should decide what to say, define the ground rules, issue a statement and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.

- Identify a single information source.

- Advise school staff of media procedures.

- Advise students of the media policy. Let them know that they do not have to talk, that they can say no.

- If the crisis is a death, consult with the deceased student/staff member's family before making any statement. Explain school system policy and assure them that confidential information is being protected.

During A Crisis:

- Attempt to define the type and extent of the crisis as soon as possible.

- Inform employees what is happening as soon as possible.

- Designate that a central source, such as the crisis communications center, coordinate information gathering and dissemination.

- Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to communications centers.

- Remind employees that only designated spokesmen are authorized to talk with news media.

- Take initiative with news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.

- When communicating, remember to maintain a unified position and uniform message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent; keep spokesman and alternates briefed.

- Contact the top administrator or designee to inform him of the current situation, emerging developments, and to clear statements.

- Delay releasing information until facts are verified and the school's position about the crisis is clear.

- Read all releases from previously prepared and approved statements to avoid danger of ad-libbing.

- Assign sufficient staff to handle phones and seek additional information.

- Keep a log of all incoming and outgoing calls and personal contacts.

- Relieve key people from their normal duties so they may focus on the crisis.

- Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the crisis.

- Prepare a general announcement to be given by the principal or designee. A straightforward sympathetic announcement of loss with a simple statement of condolence is recommended. Also, a statement that more information will be forthcoming, when verified, can be reassuring to students and staff.

Communicating with the Media in Times of Crisis

1. The primary goal should be to keep the public informed about the crisis while trying to maintain the privacy of students and ensure as little interruption of the educational process as possible.

2. As soon as possible, prepare a written statement that gives the basic facts clearly and concisely or ask the division Community Relations Director to prepare one for you. Two or three minutes spent writing down some specific points is valuable. If there is time, try to anticipate what some of the questions will be and prepare answers. News people will always want to know: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Try them out on your colleagues and see if they have any recurring questions. Use the same facts in dealing with all media so the story is consistent.

3. If news media personnel arrive on campus while students are in class, guide their activities so they will not disrupt the educational process. The news media can come onto the campus but should not be permitted to enter classrooms.

4. Don't presume to tell a reporter what is or isn't newsworthy. That decision is made by the reporters and their editors. And never -- absolutely never -- lie to a reporter. Tell the bad news quickly; get it over with. It may be your only

chance to set the record straight. It's vital to establish our division as the best source for information on the crisis. If the media think you're hiding something, they're likely to dig hard for information from other sources and play the story more sensationally -- and perhaps less accurately. Protecting and enhancing the division's credibility is important.

5. Talk conversationally, or you will inadvertently pitch your voice up and sound strained. If you don't understand the question, say so. Parroting the reporter's question is very dangerous on radio or video tape because the tape can be edited to sound like you concur whether you do or not. Suppose the reporter asks, "How are you handling this terrible shock?" Don't respond, "We are handling this terrible shock by . . ." Instead, respond in your own words to the effect that, "The students are continuing their usual schedules, following a morning assembly where we discussed the situation."

6. Answer each question and then be silent. Stick with the statement. Don't embellish it and don't respond to media pressure to chat about it. Just because a TV reporter sticks a microphone in your face or a radio reporter lets the tape run does not mean you have to fill that prolonged silence. Don't worry. . . your pauses will be removed in the editing process. If you are standing for the interview, don't back up, even through the microphone seems to be put down your throat. Plant your feel firmly and stand your ground. Suggest that everyone sit down if you need "space."

7. Remember that conflict is news, and reporters often frame their questions to bring out the conflict or emotion in a story. Guard your students against such intrusions if grief is involved in the response. (However, if the media wants student or community viewpoint, it may be well to arrange for them to talk to your PTA president.)

8. If a reporter asks several questions at once, say something like, "You've asked me several questions here. . . where would you like me to begin?" If a reporter interrupts you before you've finished answered your question, pause, let the reporter finish, and then continue your answer. Don't let the reporter get you off track or tell you when you've finished your answer. However, don't go into lengthily detail or run off with the interview either.

9. Don't let a reporter's friendly, sympathetic manner disarm you into giving him/her additional information. Don't assume any chatty comments "are off the record" even if you say they are. Keep in mind that the media aren't in business to help you with your communication needs: the media are in business to (1) make money and (2) disseminate news. "News" can be defined as any information of interest to the public.

10. Reporters are under constant deadlines, but no deadline is so important that it's worth making an inaccurate statement. If a reporter says he/she has deadline problems, ask how long you have to get the information, and then try to obtain it within that amount of time. Don't put reporters off; they will only get more insistent and abrasive if you do so.

11. It is best not to answer a query with "No comment." Otherwise, the reporters may report you wouldn't answer questions or may interpret for themselves why you aren't answering. Instead, say, "I can't share that information with you right now, but I will call you as soon as I can release it. (And do call them). Or say, "I don't know the answer, but I should have it in an hour. Please call me. If you can't reveal information at all, tell the reporters why. Examples: Relatives of an injured student haven't been notified yet or revealing the identity of a witness would jeopardize an investigation.

12. After you provide the written statement to the media or answer subsequent questions, keep a media log of whom you speak to and what you give them, whether it is the basic statement or a subsequent update. This allows you to track which medium received what information.

13. Don't ask a reporter for editing rights or to see the story for approval before it runs. Most news media have specific policies preventing this.   Reporters may well interpret these requests as insults or a slight on their competence. Don't complain to the media if you feel you were treated unfairly. You may simply draw more attention to the crisis. If major story details are inaccurate in a newspaper story, you can ask for a correction. But getting a similar correction in a TV or radio story is more difficult and must involve a giant inaccuracy.

14. The Community Relations Department should be updated on any emergency. The Community Relations Department will assist district or building administration in handling interviews with news media and coordinate the flow of information.

Media DOs and DON'Ts

Do:
- Emphasize your good record.
- Be accurate and cooperate as best you can.
- Be prepared for and prepare in advance a response to questions which might violate confidentiality or hinder the police investigation.
- Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of your students and staff.
- Speak to reporters in plain English -- not educationese.
- When asked a question and you don't know the answer, say so, then offer to find out and call the reporter back.

Don't:
- Don't try to keep the media out or "kill" a story.
- Don't say "no comment."
- Don't ad-lib.
- Don't speak "off the record."
- Don't speculate.
- Don't try to cover-up or blame anyone for anything.
- Don't repeat negative/misleading words.
- Don't play favorites among media.

How a Disaster Unfolds: An Overview

Although each crisis is unique, there often is a common pattern to the media's response in the aftermath of any tragedy that affects whole communities. The type of information sought by the media as the trauma unfolds often follows the following pattern.

0 - 12 hours: In the immediate aftermath of a community crisis the media is scrambling to get information to answer the question _ What happened? The media attempts to piece together a story, based on eye-witness accounts, monitoring police radios, and, in many cases, grabbing anyone to talk about what happened. This results in incomplete, conflicting and inaccurate accounts of what actually happened. In the worst case scenario, the media has monitored the police radio frequency and arrives at the scene of the crisis before the police or rescue workers, thus obtaining unrestricted access to the crime or disaster scene.

12 - 24 hours: As the crisis unfolds, the next question the media seeks an answer to is Who? Who are the victims? There is often a struggle over the timing of the release of the names of injured and killed victims as the authorities try to notify the surviving family members. No one is immune from the media's search for identifying information about the victim. The media will seek this information from a variety of sources, including hospitals, the police, rescue workers, families, neighbors, schools, passenger lists, co-workers -- or through encampments at the crisis scene -- all in an effort to identify who has information about the crisis and its victims.

24 - 36 hours: The next question the media tries to answer is the question of Why? Why did this tragedy happen? It is a normal reaction on the part of many people, including victims, survivors and community members, to try to understand what happened by finding someone or something to blame. Everyone has their own version of who is to blame and the media feeds into this hysteria by speculating on who or what may have caused the crisis well before the actual facts of the situation emerge. In cases of criminal acts of violence, where the obvious person to blame is identified suspect, the media will run stories laying blame on a variety of sources such as lax security, questioning whether the victim in some way contributed, or about those who could have foreseen or prevented this tragic crime. In crises involving natural disasters, where there is no offender to blame, issues of faulty construction, inadequate disaster preparedness capability, or why the victims did not carry adequate insurance coverage often arise.

36 - 72 hours: At this point during a community crisis the media continues to speculate on what happened and why, and in addition, often begins to evaluate the rescue efforts as to whether they were effective and timely. Often, this occurs even as the rescue or cleanup operations continue. Ensuring privacy for victims as they are released from the hospital, return to work, or begin to make arrangements for funerals or memorial services is critical at this time.

<u>72 hours</u> - Forward: The details of what happened at the crisis site is now old news, and the news story that is current concerns the funeral services of the deceased. In addition, the crisis story is now old news. In order to continue coverage, the media often tries to put a "spin" on a story to keep it in the news. The media looks for twists, or a new angle by which to present the same information. Issues concerning the lifestyle, social and religious pursuits of the victim, stories about victims who have suffered through similar misfortunes as well as any previous doubts about the employer, business, government agency or whoever is currently being blamed for contributing to the crisis, now all surface.

Source: National Organization for Victim Assistance

Victims Need to Know . . .

Even in a crisis situation, let victims know about their specific rights with respect to the media. Provide victims with the suggested media code of ethics which is published at the end of this chapter. Let victims know the following:

1. They do not have to talk to, pose for pictures or provide photographs to the media;

2. They can choose the time and the place for an interview -- it does not have to be immediate or at the media's convenience;

3. They can refuse to answer a question even if they already agreed to discuss the topic;

4. Let victims know that they have the right to ask to review a story before it goes to press or on the news although most media during a crisis situation operate on too tight a deadline for this.

5. In addition, quickly teach victims the difference between:
    a. "on the record" -- when everything they say is subject to publication;
    b. "off the record" -- when nothing they say should be subject to publication, although unscrupulous reporters may publish it with impunity; or
    c."for background only" -- where the information may be used without attribution to the victim.

6. Emphasize that victims should make sure which rules they are being interviewed under prior to answering any questions.
    a. techniques to shield their faces with coats, arms or whatever it takes to prevent the media from filming them;
    b. an understanding that no reporter is your friend when she or he is after a story.

Setting Limits with Media

In a school crisis, media should NOT --

- Be in the school building itself, particularly roaming the halls and/or the scene of a critical incident.
- Film deceased or injured students or staff.
- Film the family members of deceased or injured students or staff.
- Release the names of victims or perpetrators until after family notification.
- Obtain photographs of victims without explicit family permission.
- Intimidate students or staff with intrusive questions about the facts of the incident or their feelings about the event.
- Attend post-incident meetings intended to assist the school / community recover from trauma.

Strategies for Setting Limits

- Limit access to the school campus. Do not hesitate to use security personnel or, if necessary, the police.
- Direct media to an alternate location away from the school where media briefings and press conferences can be held.
- Deny admission to the press conference to any reporter who violates limits.
- Make sure teachers and parents emphasize with students that they are not required to talk with the media and assist them in preparing statements such as "Do not take my picture," "I have nothing to say," or "Please leave me alone."
- Do not permit media to attend any family or community meetings held after the event.

VII. Quick Guide to Crisis Management

Quick Guide to Crisis Management

Introduction

Provided in this chapter are a variety of samples of guidelines and checklists for the management of specific types of crises. The information is arranged alphabetically, by type of crisis. Consistent with the purpose of this review, multiple examples are provided for review and consideration by schools developing and/or refining their Crisis Management Plans.

Crisis Management Plans are best developed in light of conditions and resources of school divisions and individual schools. What is important in crisis management is that preparation occurs and that the plan "works" for a particular school and school division.

Examples presented here are from a broad range of sources including the crisis plans of many Virginia school divisions.

ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

(Minor) Accidents at School

On the playground. . . In the building or classroom . . . In Physical Education .

For minor accidents, injuries

Have students taken to clinic for assistance by a responsible person.

Other suggested preventive/supportive actions

- Post in the clinic the names of building staff who have completed paramedic training, Red Cross First Aid Training or other special lifesaving or life sustaining training or expertise (i.e., CPR); include name, schedule and phone number of school nurse.
- Post the list of emergency telephone numbers for the building by phones and other appropriate places.
- Keep a copy of emergency phone numbers and trained personnel behind this section page.
- Post general procedures in the clinic explaining when parents are to be notified of minor mishaps.
- Provide all staff with a one-page list of "emergency type" procedures of what to do in case of an accident or injury on the playground, or in the building or classroom.
- Provide in-service training with a knowledgeable speaker such as the school nurse or other trained health professional for your staff.
- Provide a standard location for placement of classroom emergency procedures.
- Provide each teacher with any special medical information about any student in his/her classroom having special medical or physical needs. Such conditions might include allergies, fainting, seizures, diabetes, etc.; also include procedures that teacher may follow in the instance of accident or other life threatening situation for the child/children.

 Related Reading

School Health Guidelines to Prevent Unintentional Injuries and Violence (2001)Centers for Disease Control. Access at www.cdc.gov

ACCIDENTS TO AND FROM SCHOOL

In the event of accidents involving an employee or student who is on the way to or from school, first determine whether or not help is on the way.

If help is not on the way, these are actions to consider:

- Call police, fire, or rescue as indicated by nature of accident (numbers provided).
- Notify Superintendent (numbers provided).
- Notify Assistant to Superintendent.
- Notify Director of Community Relations.
- Notify School Division Environmental Health & Safety Office.
- Notify parents, spouse, or individual on emergency card.

If help is on the way, **these are actions to consider:**
- If not reached earlier, continue to try to notify parents, spouse, or named individual.
- If parents, spouse, or closest relatives are not available, discuss situation with an associate at the place of employment of the parents, guardian, spouse, or closest relative.
- Send a "calm" individual to observe situation.
- Send an employee trained in life sustaining techniques if indicated.

AIRCRAFT DISASTER
Source: Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA.

Aircraft crash into or near building:
- Call police, fire or rescue as indicated by the accident (numbers provided).
- Call Managing Director of Facilities Services.
- Notify Superintendent's Office.
- Notify Director of Community Relations.
- Utilize emergency exit plan modified to maximize safety of students.
- Students and staff should be assembled in an area as far from the crash scene as possible and should be up-hill and up-wind from the crash.
- Provide for treatment and removal of injured building occupants.
- Account for all building occupants and determine extent of injuries.

Aircraft on or near school site but no damage to building
- Call Director, Department of Facilities who will notify necessary emergency personnel.
- All students and staff school division remain in the buildings. Any students and staff outside should report immediately to their classroom or designated area until further instructions are received.
- No evacuations should occur unless subsequent explosions or fire endanger the building.

ALLERGIC REACTION

Possible Symptoms:

General feeling of impending doom or fright, weakness, sweating, sneezing, short of breath, nasal itching, hives, vomiting, cough, restlessness, shock, hoarseness, swollen tongue, severe localized swelling.

First Actions:
- Assess situation, remain calm, make student/employee comfortable.
- Only move for safety reason.
- Send for immediate help and medication kit (in cases of known allergies).
- Follow medical protocol for student, if on file.
- Notify rescue squad or 911, depending on circumstances.
- Notify parent or guardian.
- Administer medication, by order of a doctor, if appropriate. Apply ice pack, keep warm.
- Observe for respiratory difficulty
- Record on an attached label time and site of insect sting and name of medicine, dosage and time, if appropriate.

Preventative/Supportive Actions:
- Encourage parents and guardians to list health situations on emergency card for their child.
- Encourage employees having health situations affecting them to alert building director and work associates of any difficulties and possible remedial actions.

ANGRY PARENT/EMPLOYEE/PATRON

Source: National School Safety Center

Handling an Angry Parent*
* strategies may be adapted to use with angry employees and patrons
- Be courteous and confident
- Remain calm
- Do not touch
- Keep at a reasonable distance
- Listen
- Allow the opportunity to vent
- Meet in a neutral, protected location
- Leave door open or have another staff member join you
- Avoid blame -- focus on what can be done

Ask:
— "How can I help you get the services you/your child needs?
— "How can we work together?"
— "What kinds of support can we put in place to help your child succeed?

ASSAULT BY INTRUDER

CHECKLIST

❑ Determine the extent of crisis.
❑ If continued danger, move other potential victims from area.
❑ Provide first aid.
❑ Question victim - make reasonable notes for potential court case:
 _ description of assailant
 _report of events
❑ Contact police (Youth Services Officer and/or 911
❑ Notify Superintendent.
❑ Instruct person answering the telephone to direct all requests to Public Information Office
❑ Complete police information for charges.____
❑ Prepare a written memo for staff and parents.
❑ Schedule follow-up programs for staff and students.
❑ Call emergency staff meeting.

SPECIFICS
1. Assess Extent of the Crisis:
▪ Request police assistance.
▪ Determine the number of victims. Determine the necessity for first aid or counseling
▪ Determine the amount of threat still pending - was this an isolated incident which is now over? Is there continued danger to the individuals) already involved or to any other potential victims?
2. Move Others to Safety:
▪ If the assailant has not been contained and continues to be a threat to others, inform staff to keep their students in the classrooms, away from the halls, door, or windows.
▪ Staff should remain calm and quietly move their students to other parts of the building, if so directed. Inform staff of potential plans as soon as possible.
3. Provide First Aid:
Provide first aid for victim(s) via nurse, nurse's aide, trained staff member, or 911. Have someone at the entrance to meet and direct the ambulance staff to the victim and designate a staff member to accompany victim(s) in ambulance.
4. Question the Victim:
Make notes which can be shared with the police upon their arrival. These notes may be helpful in a court case.

Notifications:
▪ The Superintendent's Office should be contacted as soon as possible.
▪ The Public Information Office will handle all media and community inquiries into the event(s).
▪ The parents (or spouse) of the victim should be notified as soon as possible.
▪ Inform staff of situation as soon as possible. A Crisis Team, identified for the school, can effectively deliver information to the other staff members so your time can be used for other decisions/actions.

- The Transportation Department can, in extreme emergencies, provide buses for early dismissal. The Transportation Department will notify the Superintendent of the need for this dismissal.
- The students will be able to deal with the situation by being informed of the facts as soon as possible, rather than receiving their "facts" through rumors.
- The other schools should be given the basic information as soon as possible by the Public Information Office, since siblings/neighbors will quickly learn of the disturbance.
- The Pupil Personnel Services may be needed to provide counseling support for students and staff in dealing with the trauma. This office may seek additional help from the Department of Human Resources.
- The parents of other students in the community will need to learn the real facts, just as their children have learned them, to reduce the rumor factor.
- After the crisis is over, the principal may wish to arrange a special press conference to give the media the same information that has been shared with the parents.

Communications:

Telephone Answerer: Prepare a statement for the individuals who answer the telephones to read. Instruct them that any further inquiries should be made to the Public Information Office. Give them the telephone number for the caller to use as a reference.

Written Memo for Staff and Parents: As soon as the immediate crisis/danger is over, the staff and parents will need to know, not only what occurred, but why you took the action that you did. Individuals with the correct facts can help to stop rumors and misperceptions.

Follow-Up Programs
School guidance counselors will arrange special counseling for students and staff through Pupil Personnel Services.

BOMB

Device Found

1. Isolate the area.
2. Handling of any suspected explosive device must be left to experts.
3. Evacuate the building. Evacuate by room, starting with rooms nearest the device.

Evacuation Procedures

1. Use of fire drill procedures to evacuate a school immediately upon receipt of a bomb threat can be dangerous if an actual explosive device is involved and, unknowingly, students are evacuated past its location.
2. If evacuation is needed, use personal contact. Evacuation must be as fast as possible.
3. Members of the Bomb Threat Team may be used to direct evacuation away from possible bomb area.

Bomb Threat Team. This is a predetermined group of staff members assigned the task of aiding in a search and possible building evacuation.

BOMB THREAT

Bomb Threat/Telephone Threats

The building director must evaluate the seriousness of bomb threats or other disruptive types of demonstrations using input from all sources; then, the director acts in such a manner that reflects the best safety interests of those under his/her charge. Bomb and other threats may be originated in writing, in person, over the telephone or related through a second source.

Basic Documentation - The individual taking the call should:

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
Notify principal/building director.
Write down all the information obtained in the exact words.

Use the record sheet immediately following these instruction pages; place copies of the bomb threat sheet at switchboard and other appropriate phone locations.

Bomb Threat Report Form

Questions to Ask:
 1. When is bomb going to explode?
 2. Where is it right now?
 3. What does it look like
 4. What kind of bomb is it?
 5. What will cause it to explode?
 6. Did you place the bomb?
 7. Why?
 8. What is your address?
 9. What is your name?
If voice is familiar, who did it sound like?

Threat Language

____ Well spoken (educated)
_____ Foul
_____ Irrational
_____ Taped
_____ Incoherent
_____ Message read by threat maker:

Exact wording of threat:

Time:_____   Date:___/___/___
Sex of caller:_____
Culture:_____
Age:_____
Length of call: _____
Number at which call was received:_____
Remarks:_____

Background Sounds
- ❑ Street
- ❑ Animal Noises
- ❑ PA System
- ❑ Static
- ❑ Voices
- ❑ Music
- ❑ Motor
- ❑ House Noises
- ❑ Local
- ❑ Office Machinery
- ❑ Booth
- ❑ Long Distance
Other
_____

Caller's Voice
- ❑ Calm
- ❑ Angry
- ❑ Slow
- ❑ Rapid
- ❑ Soft
- ❑ Loud
- ❑ Laughter
- ❑ Normal
- ❑ Distinct
- ❑ Slurred
- ❑ Whispered
- ❑ Cracking Voice
- ❑ Nasal
- ❑ Stutter
- ❑ Raspy
- ❑ Deep
- ❑ Ragged
- ❑ Clearing Throat
- ❑ Crying
- ❑ Disguised
- ❑ Accent
- ❑ Familiar
- ❑ Deep Breathing
- ❑ Other
_____
_

BUS ACCIDENT

Goals:
- Safety
- Containment
- Effective communication
- Mobilization
- Assessment and follow-up

Prevention:
Have a clear operation plan and be familiar with that plan. Maintain a bus accident folder including a list of each bus number, names and emergency telephone numbers of all occupants.

Intervention:
In the event that a bus accident occurs and the school has been contacted for assistance, the principal or designee determines and coordinates the appropriate responses. Interventions may include:

At the scene
- Provide emotional support.
- Be available and attend to the injured, as directed by emergency medical personnel.
- Be available and attend to the uninjured and account for all.

At the school
- Provide emotional support and coordination.
- Provide emotional support and attend to the affected students.
- Provide information to faculty.
- Call Mental Health for assistance, as needed.
- Contact parents of students involved.

At the hospital
- Provide emotional support for the injured and their families.

Postvention:
- Send letter to parents.
- Assess the response and arrange follow-up (Crisis Team).

BUS/AUTO ACCIDENT ON TRIPS AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL DIVISION

Precautionary Measures Before Leaving Division

- School buses, by law, are required to carry first aid kits. Check to see if it is in place.
- Take along a first aid kit on all field trips in all automobiles.
- Take along a list of students in attendance. Include for each a home telephone number, names of parents, parents' work telephone, home address, and any health or medical information.
- Take along a list of emergency phone numbers (listed below).
- Take along a list of chaperones and teachers who are in attendance on the trip, their home addresses and home phone numbers, name and work telephone of spouse or nearest relative and medical and health information on each.
- Follow School Board policy and administrative regulation on field trips.

In the Event of an Accident

- Remain calm
- If threat of fire exists, move children to safe place.
- Call emergency vehicles/services: police, fire, ambulance, highway patrol for locality and begin administration of first aid:
- Call principal of school.
- Notify Director of Administration and Support (list numbers).
- Notify Director of Community Relations (who will notify the Superintendent).
- Notify Director of Environmental Health & Safety Office.
- Do not issue statements to the press. Refer press to the civil authorities in charge or to the Community Relations Director.

Do not issue statements to the press. Refer press to the civil authorities in charge or to the Community Relations Director.

CHEMICAL SPILL

(Inside the building)
- Evacuate the area immediately.
- Check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)* to determine the urgency of the situation.
- Notify the building principal/supervisor/director as soon as possible.
- The building principal/supervisor/director will call the fire department if deemed necessary for consultation.
- Notify the Managing Director, Department of Facilities

*Lab file, principal's office, or custodian office

(Outside the building)
- Insure that all students are in the building and that they remain there.
- Shut off all outside air ventilators.

If you are not alerted to the situation by division personnel, phone
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Director of Facilities of Services
- Keep telephone lines clear for emergency calls only.
- Release students to parents or designee only.

CHILDNAPPING

Checklist
- ❑ Telephone police
- ❑ Call Superintendent's Office
- ❑ Notify parents of child
- ❑ Identify team to work on the crisis while rest of school maintains routine
- ❑ Obtain full description and pull out school picture
- ❑ Search school building and grounds
- ❑ If Child napping, try to obtain description of suspect
- ❑ When child is found, contact Superintendent, notify teacher, fill out Crisis Team Report
- ❑ Prepare memo to inform staff and parents of incident and actions taken
- ❑ Arrange for counseling for staff and students, if necessary
- ❑ Call emergency staff meeting

Specifics
1. Immediately after it has been determined that a child has been lost/taken, contact the Police.
2. Call the Superintendent's Office to report the incident.

3. Contact the parents of the child involved. Establish a communication plan with them, if necessary .
4. Identify a team to work on the crisis. Designate personnel to deal with phone communications, etc., and other administrative staff to assist as appropriate If the incident occurs during the school day, classroom routine should be maintained.
5. Locate the school picture of the child and obtain a full description of the child (including clothing) to assist the police.
6. Conduct immediate search of school building and grounds.
7. In cases of childnapping, obtain from witnesses a description of the suspect.
8. When a child is found, contact the Superintendent's Office, notify teacher and fill out the Crisis Team Report.
9. Prepare a memo to staff outlining the situation. Give factual information, as appropriate, to allow them to respond to students' questions knowledgeably. Prepare an appropriate memo to parents.
10. If appropriate, arrange for counseling assistance for students and staff.
11. Call emergency staff meeting.

Childnapping (continued)

Preventative activities which may help avoid childnapping situations are as follows:
- School secretary should have at her desk a list of students who are not to be released to anyone except a particular parent or guardian.
- Emergency cards of such students should be tagged.
- Before releasing a child to anyone except a parent of guardian on the list, the school secretary should check with the custodial parent and/or guardian for approval; a record of the time and date of phone approval should be made and kept.
- When parent telephones a request that a child be released from school, the identity of the caller should be confirmed (by a separate call to the parent or guardian, if needed) before the child is permitted to leave. In the event of any doubt, the message and phone number should be written down; a return call should be made after cross-checking the phone number with those on file in the child's folder or on the emergency card

Do not release any information to the press. Refer requests for information to the Community Relations Department.

DEATH

Death Of A Student Or Staff Member

- Contact Crisis Team members and have a team meeting as soon as possible.
- Notify Superintendent's Office.
- Notify Community Relations Department.
- Prepare a fact sheet giving accurate, up-to-date information.
- Hold a faculty meeting as soon as possible. Review the procedures for the day, availability of support services, referral process for at-risk students.
- Contact family of the deceased. Preferably an administrator and Crisis Team member should visit the family at their home and offer assistance.
- Hold a faculty meeting at the end of the day to review the day's events.
- Notify all bus drivers by written memo to be alert for students who show signs of emotional distress, along with a telephone number for drivers to use to reach a guidance counselor.
- Personal contact should be made with the driver of the bus which goes into the neighborhood of the student who has died. Supply a school staff member to ride the bus if that seems necessary.
- Refer to Crisis Intervention Handbook under Postvention procedures for complete details.

DISASTER

Destruction of Part/Whole of Building (e.g., tornado, plane crash, bomb)

Checklist
- ❏ Call 911.
- ❏ Obtain information on extent of damage.
- ❏ Evacuate using fire alarm or move students to safe areas in building.
- ❏ Assign one adult to supervise others in attending to injured.
- ❏ Assign staff member to assist rescue personnel.
- ❏ Call Superintendent's Office and Youth Service Officer.
- ❏ Arrange for dismissal of students.
- ❏ Handle all distribution of information to public through Public Information Office.
- ❏ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Call 911 for immediate help.
2. Damage: Inspect extent of damage and injuries.
3. Evacuation:
   If there is no danger outside the building, use fire alarm to evacuate building. Safe Areas: Identify areas away from problem area and route to be taken by classes in going to safe areas. Designate which classes/groups of students should go to which area.
4. Attend to Injured:
   Assign free adults to attend to injured, with one adult designated as "in charge".
5. Meet Rescue Personnel:
   Have staff members direct rescue personnel to problem area and assist in providing access as needed by rescue personnel.
   Make Head Custodian available to assist rescue personnel.
6. Superintendent: Notify of plan being implemented.
7 . Dismissal:
   Arrange for dismissal with Superintendent's Office and Transportation. Elementary schools may have to follow emergency closing procedures for students and should inform Extended Day of plans for dismissal. Public Information Office should be notified of emergency closing so that radio and TV stations can be contacted.
8. Information:
   - Consider briefly summarizing the situation for all students and adults prior to dismissal, by P.A. or preferably by informing teachers and having them explain to students.
   - If time permits, prepare a written memo to parents detailing the situation and how it was handled, including plan for follow-up, to be sent home with students or distributed the following day.
   - Call an emergency staff meeting after students leave to explain the situation and any plans for follow-up.
   - Involve Public Information in all information being prepared and distributed and refer media and other calls from the general public to that office.

Call an emergency staff meeting.

DISASTER PREVENTING DISMISSAL
(e.g., hurricane, tornado, sniper, plane crash)

Checklist
- ❑ Call 911.
- ❑ Identify safe areas in building and direct staff to escort students to identified areas.
- ❑ When situation is "clear," return students to class.
- ❑ Arrange for dismissal if appropriate by calling Superintendent and Transportation.
- ❑ Prepare memo/letters to inform staff and parents.
- ❑ Distribute information to public via Public Information Office.
- ❑ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Information may be received from a variety of sources:
   - telephone call
   - Superintendent's Office
   - radio or television
   - visual observation

   Ascertain specifics such as extent of immediate danger, possible length of time danger may exist.
2. Safe areas - Consider large areas at the interior of the building away from numerous windows and outside walls which have a reliable source of lighting. Designate which classes/groups of students should go to which area. Evacuate trailers to main building or safe area.
3. Move students - Use the P.A., if working, or a system of notes sent by messengers, to inform teachers and other adults of the situation and where to bring students.
4. Superintendent - Notify of plan being implemented; call police and maintain contact as necessary.
5. All "clear" - Monitor situation to ascertain when danger is removed; direct teachers and other adults to escort students back to class when situation is clear.
6. If crisis interferes with normal dismissal, arrange with Transportation and Superintendent's Office to dismiss students following normal procedures. Elementary schools will want to inform Extended Day personnel in advance of dismissal.
7. Information
   - Consider briefly summarizing the danger and its resolution for all students prior to dismissal by P.A. or preferably by informing teachers and having them explain to students.
   - Consider preparing a written memo to parents detailing the situation and how it was handled to be sent home with students or distributing it the following day.
   - Prepare written memo to staff summarizing the situation and how it was handled.
8. Handle all distribution of information through the Public Information Office.
9. Call emergency staff meeting.

EARTHQUAKE

Because earthquakes can strike without warning, the immediate need is to protect lives by taking the best available cover.

The principal will follow these guidelines in so far as they are possible:

1.Give instructions to teachers via intercom or megaphone.
2.Call 911.

The teacher will follow these guidelines:

1. Instruct the students to drop to the floor and secure protection beneath a desk or table.

2. After the tremor subsides, usher the students out of the building according to the established route for fire evacuation. Leave through the nearest accessible door if the planned route is inaccessible.

3. Call roll to be sure all students have exited safely; notify the administration if a student is missing.

4. Instruct students to stay clear of the buildings and power lines.

One earthquake drill per semester is recommended. Include alternate evacuation routes.

When considered appropriate, details of an earthquake drill should appear in staff handbooks.

FIGHTING

Violence Between Two or More Students

Goals:
- Safety
- Effective communication
- Mobilization
- Containment
- Assessment and follow-up

Suggested Procedures for Handling Fights in School Settings

Intervening and managing physical altercations and/or fights require making a judgment call. There may be several goals at one time and individual circumstances will determine the priorities of your interventions.

1. Walk briskly - don't run.
2. Get help along the way; send responsible students for help from the closest source.
3. Assess and evaluate:
   a. the number of students involved
   b. the size of students involved
   c. any weapons that are involved
   d. proximity of individuals who can assist
4. Recognize that there may be several subtle things going on simultaneously that are being tangibly expressed in the conflict. Is there gang involvement? What other alliances might exist?
5. Calmly take charge of the situation.
6. Disburse any crowd.
7. Identify yourself to the fighters and tell them to stop fighting in a firm, authoritative voice. If known, call the students by name.
8. Separate the combatants; avoid physical force.
9. Remove participants to the office.
10. Get medical attention if necessary.
11. Describe incident in writing.
12. Debrief relevant teacher(s).
13. Provide protection and support for victims.
14. Provide counseling (not simply the day after the event, but as long as necessary).
15. Report incident to law enforcement and other child serving agencies who may be serving the youngster.

FIRE/ARSON/EXPLOSIVES

Checklist

- ❏ Sound alarm; evacuate building.
- ❏ Call 911.
- ❏ Determine if there are any serious injuries.
- ❏ Call Superintendent.
- ❏ Arrange transportation for dismissal.
- ❏ Determine building status for return to classes.
- ❏ Follow-up activities.
- ❏ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Sound alarm. Evacuate building if serious threat of danger. Prior arrangements should be made for the evacuation of any handicapped.
2. Call 911 and ask for required emergency services.
3. If there are serious injuries, notify necessary rescue personnel. Provide first aid through school personnel, such as school nurse, nurse's aide, and athletic trainer.
4. Call Superintendent's Office and notify of incident and actions.
5. In all probability, school will have to be dismissed and arrangements for transportation will have to be made. Students and staff will have to be informed. A portable bull horn should be available to make announcements to students and staff who have evacuated the building.
6. If the building is damaged, several different steps may have to be taken. Severe damage will require delayed repair work - another location for classes will have to be scheduled through the Superintendent's Office.
7. Prepare written memo for staff to advise of follow-up procedures. Send letter for parents home with students.
8. Call emergency staff meeting.

GAS LEAK

Natural gas leaks, with order in the building, may occur and bring danger of explosion. Natural gas rises and will often be outside because most gas lines are outside the building. Natural gas is mixed with Mercaptan to give it odor. The gas goes up and the odor goes down.

If a leak is in or near the building:
Evacuate the building immediately, following your local building evacuation plan. Get students a safe distance from the building.

Turn off the main gas valve.

Location: _____

Phone Fire Department   (list numbers here)
                     _____

Phone Facility Services   (list numbers here)
                     _____

Phone Gas Company   (list numbers here)
                     _____

If time permits, phone the Superintendent's Office to alert that office of the current situation. That office will notify the Community Relations Office.

Keep students at a safe distance until the problem has been corrected.

HOSTAGE ARMED/DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Checklist

- ❑ _Contact the police (911).
- ❑ _Institute lockdown procedures.
- ❑ _Notify Superintendent.
- ❑ Instruct person answering the phone to direct all requests to Public Information Office.
- ❑ Keep telephone lines open for police use (pay telephones as well).
- ❑ Keep maps of the building and grounds available in more than one area of the facility (i.e. Main Office and Custodians' Office).
- ❑ Identify individuals familiar with the building to assist the police in locating and isolating the intruder.
- ❑ Prepare written memo for staff and parents.
- ❑ Complete and submit Crisis Team Report.
- ❑ Schedule follow-up programs for students and staff and review security plan.
- ❑ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Contact the Police: Hostage-taking or endangering the safety of others are criminal offenses.
2. Institute lockdown procedures.
3. Notification:
   - The Superintendent's Office should be contacted as soon as possible.
   - The Public Information Office will handle all media and community inquiries.
   - Keep staff well informed. A Crisis Team, identified for the school, can effectively deliver information to the other staff members so your time can be used for other actions/decisions.
   - The Transportation Department will provide buses for evacuation of students to a safer location or to their homes. Transportation will notify the Superintendent of the need for this dismissal.
   - The students will be able to deal with the situation by being informed of the facts as soon as possible, rather than receiving their "facts" through rumors.
   - The other schools should be given the basic information as soon as possible since
   - siblings/neighbors will quickly learn of the disturbance.
   - The parents of the school community will need to learn about the safety of their own children, to be informed where to pick them up if needed, and to learn the real facts to reduce the rumor factor.
   - After the crisis is over, the Public Information Office may wish to arrange a special press conference to give the media the same information that has been shared with the parents.

4. Staff to Keep Students in Present Areas: Students should not be released for any reason until told to do so by the police.
5. No Personnel Circulating: or the same reason as #4, all staff should be protected from involvement in the crisis where possible.
6. Telephone Answerer:
    Prepare a statement to be read by the individuals who answer the telephones. Instruct them that any further inquiries should be made to the Public Information Office. Give them the telephone number for the caller to call.
7. Keep Phone Lines Open: The police and other public safety personnel will need access to the phones with highest priority. Even the pay phones need to be available to the police.
8. Maps in More Than One Location: School maps will be most helpful to the police in locating the intruder and planning strategies for the apprehension. More than one area should house current maps in case the intruder has "holed up" in the area where the maps would usually be found.
9. I. D. Persons Familiar with the Facility: Persons familiar with the entire building should be available to discuss the interior room arrangements, etc. These individuals should be available at the chosen school map location away from the scene.
10. Written Memo for Staff and Parents: As soon as the immediate crisis/danger is over, the staff and parents will need to know, not only what occurred, but why you took the action you did.
11. Serious Incident Report: Complete and submit Crisis Team Report within twenty-four (24) hours.
12. Follow-up Activities: Guidance counselors, as well as Pupil Personnel Services, can provide counseling for students and staff.
13. Call emergency staff meeting.

HOSTAGE SITUATION/ BARRICADED CAPTOR

OVERVIEW:

A hostage situation is any situation in which a person or persons is forced to stay in one location by one or more individuals. Weapons are usually in the possession of the hostage taker(s) and hostages are threatened with some degree of bodily harm should they not comply with the directives of the hostage taker(s). Certain demands are usually made of outside officials in return for the release of the hostages.

All hostage situations are dangerous events. A hostage taker might be a terrorist, fleeing felon, disgruntled employee (past or present), spouse's significant other, drug or alcohol abuser, emotionally disturbed person, trespasser, and on occasion, a parent, student or citizen who is usually angry about some situation and decides to resolve it by taking hostages and making demands to achieve some resolution. Likewise, the dynamics of a hostage situation vary greatly and no two incidents will be the same.

PLAN OF ACTION: BUILDINGS

Upon notification of a hostage situation within any activity, event, school, or building under the control of the public schools, the following procedures should be implemented:

PRINCIPAL: The principal/administrative head or designated individual will assume command of the situation until the arrival of law enforce officials at the scene. Security officers should work closely with the principal/administrative head/designee to ensure that this plan of action is safely achieved. School radios should be utilized when it is established that the hostage taker does not have one. If he does, radios should not be used

CONTAINMENT: Appropriate actions should be taken to isolate the hostage taker and the victims under his control. It is important that no additional individuals be exposed to the hostage taker.

EVACUATION: Using a pre-arranged signal, immediately evacuate the building and ensure that egress of students and personnel is done in a manner that they do not go near the area controlled by the hostage taker. All individuals should proceed to a prearranged location out of sight of the building so that the possibility of injury from gunfire is minimized. Students are to remain under the supervision of public school officials.

RE-ENTRY: Ensure that no individuals enter or re-enter the building.

CONTACT 911: Immediately have a staff member contact 911 and give all available information to the dispatcher who will relay the information to the law enforcement authorities. Ensure that the caller remains on the line with the 911 dispatcher until police actually arrive at the scene. This will ensure that accurate,

detailed information in relayed to responding officers and school officials can respond to requests of the police department.

CONTACT OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF OPERATIONS:
Immediately have another staff member contact the Office of the Deputy Superintendent for Operations at _____ and give all available information to that office. Ensure that the caller remains on the line with the Office of the Deputy Superintendent until such time as directed to terminate the call by that Office.

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT FOR OPERATIONS: The Office of the Deputy Superintendent for Operations will immediately contact the Superintendent, the Director of Informational Services, the Coordinator of Security, the Director of Transportation, and the Director of School Plant Facilities.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY: Upon response of the law enforcement agency, control of the scene will be assumed by that agency.

The principal or building administrator should initiate contact with the law enforcement agency and report to the Command Center when it is operational. *It is important that the items such as building keys and detailed building plans be turned over to the police department.* Important information such as camera and monitoring locations, hearing and broadcast devices, motion sensors, location of radios, availability of phones, *et cetera*, must be conveyed to the police department. Anecdotal information regarding the cause of the incident, identity of the hostages and hostage takers, and their location in the building is of great importance. The principal, custodial staff, and plant personnel who are knowledgeable of the building design need to describe the premises using the detailed building plans.

RESPONSE BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICIALS: The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent for Operations, Director of Informational Services, Director of Transportation, Director of School Plant Facilities, and the Coordinator of Security should respond to the Command Center.

MEDIA: The Director of Informational Services for the public schools and the Public Information Officer for the law enforcement agency will handle all press matters as well as the dissemination of information to students and parents at the scene.

DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION: The Director of Transportation will, at the direction of the Superintendent or his designee, coordinate the utilization of school buses to evacuate students to another location or to their homes.

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL PLANT FACILITIES: The Director of School Plant Facilities will interface with appropriate officials of the Jefferson County Police Department to ensure that all their needs are met with regards to the facility under siege.

NEGOTIATIONS: It is important to remember that it is the philosophy of the law enforcement agency to end a hostage situation through negotiating tactics. Often it is a lengthy process. An assault is only used when all indications are that the hostage taker will harm the hostages and lives will in fact be saved through such an assault.

CLOSURE: Upon the arrest of the hostage taker and the release of the hostages the control of the school or building will be returned to the public schools.

<u>**PLAN OF ACTION:**</u>   **SCHOOL BUS**

Consideration must be given to the possibility of a hostage situation occurring on a bus operated by the public schools. If such an incident occurs, the following procedures should be implemented.

BUS DRIVER: The bus driver must assume a position of heightened responsibility for the welfare of the students on the bus as well as his/her own safety. Sound judgment, good decision making, knowledge of school and police procedures in handling such incidents, and training are the items that will be of greatest assistance to you should you become a victim. Students must be made aware of the behavior that will be required of them so they will be safe and do not inflame an already volatile situation.

The bus driver should accomplish the following tasks if they can be done in a safe manner:

- Disable the bus or throw the keys away from the bus. This will eliminate the need to move the bus and will be helpful to the Jefferson County Police Department who will respond to the scene as soon as the location has been established.
- Evacuate as many students as possible from the bus and direct them to move to a position out of sight of the bus.
- Clear the area of as many students and others as is safely possible.
- Notify the transportation radio dispatcher of as much information as possible regarding your situation and location. If allowed to maintain radio contact, do so. All radio transmissions must be disciplined.

Transportation Department: The dispatch office should call 911 and the Deputy Superintendent for Operations and all procedures set out in the Plan of Action for Buildings should be implemented.

EMPLOYEE VICTIM-HOSTAGE

A situation may arise in which you become a hostage.
Other individuals, such as students, employees, and citizens may become hostages as the same time.
Remember that each incident involving hostages is different. Variables such as hostage takers, hostages, motivation for the act, and location of the incident make each occurrence unique. Sound judgment, good decision making, knowledge of school and police procedures in handling such incidents, and

training are the items that will be of greatest assistance to you should you become a victim.

Responsibility:

The major responsibility of individuals who have become hostages is to remain calm and act in a manner that will preserve their life, as well as the lives of other hostages.

If, in fact, the other hostages are students, public school personnel have the additional duties of ensuring that these children are aware of the behavior that will be required of them so they will be safe and do not inflame an already volatile situation.

Initially, you may be the person who is thrust into the role of negotiating with the hostage taker(s). Always remain calm and request that the situation end by the release of the hostages or the escape of the hostage takers from the area. At all times, remain neutral regarding the reasons given by the hostage taker(s) for taking this action. Your concern is safety and the release of the hostages. Further, responses of the hostage taker may be irrational or illogical, depending upon his/her mental condition and/or the stress of the situation.

Law Enforcement Agency:

Be prepared to wait, as the resolution of hostage situations traditionally takes time. Be assured that the public schools and the law enforcement agency are acting on your behalf, and are acting as quickly as possible.

The law enforcement agency Crisis Negotiator will contact the hostage taker and begin the process of negotiating an end to the situation. If requested to talk to the negotiator, the public schools' employee should do so. Answer all questions as fully as possible. At this point, the negotiator has the major responsibility to successfully end the situation.

At the conclusion of the situation, the law enforcement agency will request that you talk at some length with a police officer so that all pertinent information can be recorded.

Source: Based on a sample from Norfolk City Public Schools, Norfolk, Virginia

INTRUDER/TRESPASSER

Checklist

- ❑ Determine the whereabouts of the intruder/trespasser.
- ❑ Isolate the individual.
- ❑ Determine the extent of the crisis.
- ❑ Make reasonable notes for potential court case.
- ❑ Move other students and staff from area.
- ❑ Contact police - 911.
- ❑ Notify superintendent.
- ❑ Instruct person answering the telephone to direct all requests to Public Information Office.
- ❑ Complete and submit police information for charges.
- ❑ Prepare a written memo for staff and parents.
- ❑ Complete Crisis Team Report.
- ❑ Schedule follow-up activities for staff and students, including security plan review.
- ❑ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Determine whereabouts of the intruder: Use school maps to assist police and staff members in locating intruder.
2. Isolate intruder from rest of building and students.
3. Determine extent of the crisis:
   - Trespass with no safety hazard may be dealt with through informing the intruder of the offense being committed. If trespasser refuses to leave, wait for police to arrest. If the trespasser has previously been warned (placed on notice) trespass charges may be filed without the arrest of the offender.
   - Trespass <u>with</u> threat to others' safety will require assistance from the police. Trespass charges should be filed.
4. Make notes. Recording what has occurred can provide information important to the police and in subsequent court cases.
5. Move other Students/Staff: Staff may be asked to keep their students in certain areas, or to keep them out of certain areas. Staff should move students as quietly and quickly as possible when directed to do so.
6. Contact the Police: Trespassing is a misdemeanor or felony, depending upon the location of the intrusion.
7. Notification:
   - The Superintendent's Office should be contacted as soon as possible.
   - The Public Information Office will handle media and community inquiries.
   - Keep staff informed of actions. A Crisis Team, identified for the school, can effectively deliver information to other staff members so that the administrator's time can be used for other decisions/action.
   - The Transportation Department can, in extreme emergencies, provide buses for early dismissal. The Transportation Department will notify the Superintendent of the need for this dismissal.
   - The students will be able to deal with the situation by being informed of the facts, as soon as possible, rather than receiving their "facts" through rumor.

- Other schools should be given the basic information as soon as possible by the Public Information Office since siblings/neighbors will quickly learn of the situation.
- The parents of the students in the community will need to learn the real facts, just as their children have learned them, to reduce the rumor factor.
- After the crisis is over, the Public Information Office may wish to arrange a special press conference to give the media the same information that has been shared with the parents.

8. Telephone Answerer: Prepare a statement for the individuals who answer the telephones to read. Instruct them that any further inquiries should be made to the Public Information Office. Give them the phone number for the caller to call.

9. Police Information for Charges: The police will need to be sure of details from you as well as from others interviewed. Trespassing is a misdemeanor or felony, depending upon the location of the intrusion.

10. Written Memo for Staff and Parents: As soon as the immediate crisis/danger is over., the staff and parents will need to know, not only what occurred, but why you took the action that you did.

11. Crisis Team Report. Submit it within twenty-four (24) hours.

12. Follow-Up Activities. Pupil Personnel Services will provide counseling for students and staff. The building security plan should also be reviewed.

13. Call emergency staff meeting.

PERCEIVED CRISES

Perceived crises are conditions or situations, often community-based, that are perceived as potentially affecting a large number of people. Examples of perceived crisis include racial events, school rivalry situations, events in which a group feels left out or not represented, introduction of new school procedures without adequate warning, real or perceived unsafe conditions such as toxic fumes or food poisoning, gang-related activities, or rumors about people with HIV/AIDS or other contagious conditions. It is the task of those in charge to defuse any irrational response.

Prevention:

- Identify situations in advance that may be perceived crises.
- Establish open lines of communication with students and staff.
- Develop a procedure for dealing with the public and the media.

Intervention:

- For any health condition, immediately contact the appropriate health authorities.
- Don't panic. Project a sense of calm and control.
- Gather detailed and accurate information about the perceived crisis.
- If necessary, call a team meeting to assess the situation and make decisions on what actions to take.
- Provide appropriate faculty, staff and those individuals or groups affected by the situation with specific information.
- Designate someone who would act as a single point of contact for controlling rumors. Keep lines of communication open; a feeling that secrets are being kept can increase the sense of crisis.
- Have trained individuals available to speak with small groups of students/staff.
- Take all actions that you have determined necessary to prevent a more serious situation from developing.

Postvention:

- Conduct stabilizing activities as soon as possible to project an atmosphere of normal conditions.

- Conduct follow-up and assessment activities with team members and other staff.

POISONING

In the event of the poisoning or suspected poisoning of a student or an employee:

Immediate Actions:

Call the rescue squad   (list numbers here) _____

Call the Poison Control Center   1-800-222-1222   (Nationwide number)

Administer first aid suggested by poison information center.

Preventative Measures:

- Post in the clinic information from Poison Control Center regarding emergency numbers.
- List in the clinic the names of building personnel who have special paramedic, first aid training, or other special life-saving or life-sustaining training.
- Provide staff information on possible poisonous materials in the building.

POWER FAILURE

If there has been a power failure at a school, or if lines are reported down in the area of the school:

Power failure*

Notify Dominion Power   _____(list numbers here)_____

Notify Maintenance Section   _____(list numbers here)_____

Notify Facilities Director   _____(list numbers here)_____

Lines down in area*

Have an adult posted in the area of the downed lines to prevent children and other people from going near them.

Notify Dominion Power   _____(list numbers here)_____

Notify Maintenance Section   _____(list numbers here)_____

*   Note that telephone notification may require use of cellular phone, depending on whether telephone is set up to rely on electricity.

SHOOTINGS/WOUNDINGS/ATTACKS

Checklist
- ❑ Assess the situation.
- ❑ Call: 911
  Police/School Resource Officer
  Ambulance
- ❑ Use emergency signal - all students and staff are to stay in classrooms, secure the door, and stay on the floor.
- ❑ Establish a command post with several telephones available.
- ❑ Implement first aid procedures until rescue service arrives.
- ❑ Notify Superintendent's Office.
- ❑ Keep a written log of events.

After the danger has passed,
- ❑ Prepare a written memo for staff and parents.
- ❑ Implement necessary follow-up activities.
- ❑ Call emergency staff meeting.

Specifics
1. Notify the police, and other necessary emergency staff.
2. Determine if the perpetrator is still on premises - determine number of victims and identify witnesses.
3. The emergency signal to staff and students should convey the seriousness of the situation. Follow-up announcements will be necessary to keep everyone informed. Prepare a general statement of the facts.
4. Establish a command post to handle the load of the Crisis Team and to direct the press and concerned members of the community to the Public Information Office.
5. Implement necessary first aid procedures through trained staff, school nurse, nurse's aide, physical education department, and/or athletic trainer. Direct rescue personnel to injured and give any required assistance. Designate staff member to accompany victim(s) in ambulance.
6. Contact Superintendent's Office.
7. Identify a place where a log of events is to be kept. Record all significant events, actions, and individuals that are involved.
8. Keep staff informed through a memo or emergency staff meeting. Parents may be informed through a letter sent home with students.
9. Follow-up management should be well-delegated. Crisis counseling for students and staff may be needed, and security concerns should be considered. All staff will assist in restoring building to normal state. Reopen school as soon as possible.
10. Call emergency staff meeting.

TORNADO

Goals:
- Safety
- Effective communications
- Mobilization
- Containment
- Assessment and follow-up

Prevention:
- Post and practice mobilization plan.

Definitions:
Severe Weather Watch: Forecast of severe weather in area; normal activities continue; no school-wide announcement; principal or designee monitor the situation.
Severe Weather Warning: Severe and dangerous weather situation approaching. Be prepared.

Intervention:
1. Principal alerts staff of impending situation. Call emergency numbers as needed; call superintendent (principal or designee).
2. Evacuate classrooms according to plan; provide for handicapped.
3. Move students quickly and quietly to designated area, underground shelter if available or interior hallways on first floor. Avoid windows, auditoriums, gyms, and any wide span or overhead structure. North and east walls are preferable to south and west walls. Sit in fetal position with face and head protected. Review "drop and tuck" command.
4. Get word to all students and staff who are outside or who are in out-lying buildings.
5. Check for and provide care for injured.
6. Secure tool box (designated duty).
7. Account for all students/staff/others.
8. Determine status for safe return to classes or dismissal (principal or designee).

Postvention:

Assess the response and prepare follow-up of situation (Crisis Team).

VANDALISM

- Photograph any willful and malicious destruction of school property (e.g., graffiti, broken windows, etc.).
- For minor damage, simply note the time, date, and type of damage for your records.
- For serious acts of vandalism (e.g., hate crimes or gang-related activity), report them to your school security officer or the police.
- Clean up and repair the damage as soon as possible to avoid encouraging future acts of vandalism.
- Aggressively prosecute all vandals to convey that you will not tolerate this type of offense.
- Collect restitution by having the offender pay money or provide labor to clean and/or repair the damage he or she has caused.

WEAPONS SITUATION

Checklist

❑ Assess the situation.
❑ Notify police.
❑ Gather information.
❑ Isolate individual or suspect.
❑ Do not use force or touch the person or weapon.
❑ Remain calm.
❑ Notify another administrator what the situation is.
❑ Use emergency signal to notify teachers of the threatening situation and institute lockdown procedures until all is clear.
❑ Notify Superintendent.
❑ Refer media questions to the Director of Community Relations.

Specifics
1. Assess the situation.
2. Notify police. Provide as much information as possible. Be prepared to act as a resource and liaison between school and police. If necessary, have a map of the school available for police.
3. Gather as much detailed information as possible. Try to determine:
   — Location, identity and detailed description of individual.
   — Location and description of weapon.
   — Any pertinent background information on individual, including possible reason for carrying a weapon.
4. Isolate individual or suspect. (If weapon is in a locker or elsewhere, prevent access to it.)
5. Confer with police when they arrive. They will advise you how they intend to proceed.
6. If interaction with the individual is imminent, do not use force or touch the person or weapon. Avoid sudden moves or gestures.
7. Remain calm. Try not to raise your voice -- but, if this becomes necessary, do so decisively and with clarity. Your tone and demeanor will strongly influence the outcome of the crisis.
8. Be certain that at least one other administrator (or designee) is aware of the situation, but limit information to staff and students on a need to know basis.
9. Notify Superintendent.
10. Use emergency signal to notify teachers of the threatening situation and have teachers keep students in classroom until all is clear.
11. Refer media questions to the Director of Community Relations.
12. Call emergency staff meeting. It is important that staff members leave with accurate information about the incident and subsequent actions to be taken.

RESOURCES

Crisis Response Services

NOVA CRT (National Organization for Victim Assistance Crisis Response Team)

The mission of the CRT is to serve as consultants to the leaders and caregivers of a community in severe distress. A CRT consists of service professionals from all over the country, typically including mental health specialists, victim advocates, public safety professionals, and members of the clergy, among others. All team members are volunteers with only their travel and lodging expenses covered by the local community or from donations to NOVA.

NOVA will send a crisis response team to any community in crisis within twenty-four hours of a request. There are three primary tasks the team performs:

1. Helping local decision-makers identify all the groups at risk of experiencing trauma;
2. Training the local caregivers who are to reach out to those groups after the CRT has departed, and
3. Leading one or more group crisis intervention sessions (also known as "debriefings") to show how those private sessions can help victims start to cope with their distress.

See www.try-nova.org or call (800) TRY-NOVA for additional information.

NEAT (National Emergency Assistance Team)

The National Emergency Assistance Team (NEAT) is part of the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) strategic commitment to help schools, families and communities cope with crisis situations. While every school ideally should have the internal capacity to provide appropriate, effective intervention in a crisis, some traumatic events require outside assistance from professionals with specific expertise in crisis intervention. NEAT is comprised of seven nationally certified school psychologists who have had formal training in and direct crisis experience involving manmade and natural disasters. NEAT's role varies according to the needs of each situation, but team members provide services ranging from advice over the phone to joining a crisis management team at the scene when invited. NEAT's mission is to:

- Provide direct aid and assistance to schools and communities in emergency crisis situations.
- Promote crisis management preparation and planning.
- Expand the network of professionals able to lend support to their schools and communities during a crisis event.
- Train school psychologists and other professionals in crisis preparedness and response.
- Advocate for safe, healthy schools through legislative and policy initiatives.

To contact NEAT, call (301) 657-0270.

Agencies and Organizations

American Association of Experts in Traumatic Stress
368 Veterans Memorial Highway
Commack, NY 11725
(631) 543-2217   FAX (631) 543-6977
http://www.aaets.org

AAETS is a multidisciplinary network of professionals who are committed to the advancement of intervention for survivors of trauma. Their mission is to increase awareness of the effects of these traumatic events and, ultimately, to improve the quality of intervention with survivors. The organization has multiple certification programs, publications, and an international registry.

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org
1-800-448-3543

The Red Cross has a disaster education kit for grades K-8, Masters of Disaster, that helps schools incorporate important disaster preparedness and response skills into such core subjects as math, social studies, science, and language arts. A three-chapter supplement to the program has been added: Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with Terrorism and Tragic Events. The supplement is available for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Each chapter contains four lessons and accompanying activity sheet. The kits are aligned with national curriculum standards and cover such topics as discerning facts within media coverage, introducing international humanitarian laws and principles, and addressing the psychological impacts of disaster. Additional information on the curricula is available from curric@redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
4770 Buford Highway, MS K-60
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 488-4646
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/yvpt/yvpt.htm

A part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the mission of the Youth Violence and Suicide Prevention Team is to promote implementation of efforts to prevent injuries resulting from assaultive and suicidal behavior through development and dissemination of science-based knowledge, intervention, and prevention strategies, working with public and private organizations. The Center conducts research and program evaluation and disseminates information; excellent website with links to many useful resources. Website contains important information on public health emergency preparedness and response.

Center for Mental Health in Schools
UCLA Dept. of Psychology
P.O. Box 951563
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

Operating under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools is one of the two national training and technical assistance centers focused on mental health in schools; the other center is at the University of Maryland at Baltimore. The center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given to polices and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs. Website includes downloadable information and training materials on school-based crisis management.

Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)
Emergency Services and Disaster Relief Branch
5600 Fishers Lane, Rm, 17C-20
Rockville, MD 20857
www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/emergencyservices/index.htm

Through an interagency agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), CMHS staff helps to ensure that victims of Presidentially declared disasters received immediate, short-term crisis counseling, as well as ongoing support for emotional recovery. CMHS collaborates with FEMA to train State mental health staff to develop crisis counseling training and preparedness efforts in their States.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado
Campus Box 422
Boulder, CO 80309
(303) 492-8147
www.colorado.edu/UCB/Research/cspv

The Institute provides informed assistance to groups committed to understanding and preventing violence, particularly adolescent violence. CSPV has three main sections: First, the Information House collects research literature and resources on the causes and prevention of violence and provides direct information services to the public by offering topical searches on customized databases. Second, CSPV offers technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs. Third, CSPV maintains a basic research component through data analysis and other projects on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention Website has "Blueprints" listing programs demonstrated to be effective in the prevention of violence.

Children's Safety Network
National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center
Education Development Center,Inc.
 Washington DC 20037
 PH: (202) 466-0540
 FX: (202) 223-4059
 www.childrensafetynetwork.org/

Providing information and technical assistance to maternal and child health agencies and other organizations in efforts to reduce unintentional injuries and violence to children and adolescents, Children's Safety Network's services include telephone and on-site consultation, development of written materials based on identified needs of practitioners, and technical assistance to improve efforts to prevent injury and violence. CSN also provides educational, research and resource materials, and serves as a clearinghouse linking injury prevention professionals.

Federal Bureau of Investigation
J. Edgar Hoover Building
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001
(202) 324-3000
www.fbi.gov

The FBI is the principal investigative arm of the United States Department of Justice. It has the authority and responsibility to investigate specific crimes assigned to it. The FBI also is authorized to provide other law enforcement agencies with cooperative services, such as fingerprint identification, laboratory examinations, and police training. Website includes information designed for students, teachers, and parents as well as information on counterterrorism.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
P. O. Box 70244
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 646-3484
www.fema.gov

FEMA is an independent agency of the federal government, reporting to the President. Since its founding in 1979, FEMA's mission has been to reduce loss of life and property and protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Offers training on multi-hazard emergency planning for schools. The children's section on the FEMA website includes information about disaster planning for schools and information for teachers about talking to kids about terrorism. There is also a place for kids to e-mail with questions, concerns, and comments.

Hamilton Fish National Institute on Schools and Communities Violence
2121 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037-1830
(202) 496-2200
www.hamfish.org

The Institute, with assistance from Congress, was founded in 1997 to serve as a national resource to test the effectiveness of school violence prevention methods and to develop more effective strategies. The Institute's goal is to determine what works and what can be replicated to reduce violence in America's schools and communities. Services include: providing the most current information and analysis about the levels and trends on school violence in the nation; providing comprehensive literature reviews, research papers, and a searchable database for resources on violence prevention topics; consulting on effective strategies and promising model programs for violence prevention; assisting schools to conduct needs assessments for violence prevention and in the evaluation of school violence interventions; and providing assistance to policymakers at the local, state and national level.

Join Together
441 Stuart Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 437-1500
(617) 437-9394
www.jointogether.org

Join Together, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health, is a national resource for communities fighting substance abuse and gun violence. Services include: Reports, newsletters and community action toolkits; The National Leadership Fellows program which develops, recognizes and supports community leaders (Join Together Fellows); Public policy panels which examine and recommend changes in public policies and practices related to substance abuse; Technical assistance designed to link people nationwide, so that they can share information and resources, and learn from one another; Surveys which help to measure and define the community movement against substance; and JTO Direct delivers information directly to subscribers via email.

Mothers Against Violence in America (MAVIA)
105 14th Avenue, Suite 2A
Seattle, WA 98122
(800) 897-7697 or (206) 323-2303
www.mavia.com

National grassroots network of mothers working to prevent violence by and against children; promote safe schools, homes and communities. Hosts Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), a national, student-driven organization to assist students to find solutions to violence in schools and communities.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 657-0270
www.nasponline.org

The mission of NASP is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environment for children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing problem evaluation, and caring professional service.

National Association of School Resource Officers
P. O. Box 40
Boynton Beach, Florida 33425
(561) 736-1736
www.nasro.org

NASRO is a non-profit organization made up of school based-law enforcement officers and school administrators. The association serves as a training organization for school-based police and district personnel and sponsors an annual conference each summer. Membership is open to school based police and school administration.

National Center for Conflict Resolution Education
Illinois Bar Center
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 523-7056
(217) 523-7066
www.nccre.org/

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program fund a cooperative agreement with the Illinois State Bar Association to advance NCCRE training and technical assistance. Through this federal project, NCCRE promotes the development of conflict resolution education programs in schools, juvenile justice arenas and youth service organizations. NCCRE provides: information about conflict resolution education curriculum and learning resources; staff to facilitate on-site program planning and development; staff and consultants to facilitate onsite (2-3 days) training; assistance in designing and conducting program evaluation; follow-up technical assistance for program implementation via phone consultation and e-mail.

National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (NCPTSD)
(802) 296-5132
www.ncptsd.org

The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was created within the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1989, in response to a Congressional mandate to address the needs of veterans with military-related PTSD. The Center for PTSD has led efforts to study the effects of psychological trauma with involvement in over 500 research studies and 200 educational projects focusing on PTSD and other psychological and medical consequences of traumatic stress. An extensive collection of informational materials for a broad range of audiences is available on the website.

National Crime Prevention Council
1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-6272
www.ncpc.org/2schvio.htm

NCPC's Mission is to enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur. NCPC is a national, nonprofit educational organization that is the voice for crime prevention; a source of help for individuals, neighborhoods, communities and governments; and the McGruff people. Sponsors "Embedding Prevention in Policy and Practice, a new state-community partnership to prevent the high-risk behaviors that often lead to crime.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849
(800) 688-4252
www.ncjrs.org/recovery

The National Criminal Justice Reference Service has developed a resource for victims, family members, concerned citizens, service providers, and researchers. The Resources for Recovery website features resources for victims and victim service providers, volunteer opportunities, parenting resources, threat assessment and crisis management strategies, and training and technical assistance information for practitioners. NCJRS is one of the largest criminal justice information networks in the world. Website has

extensive information on criminal and juvenile justice and drug policy; offers publications, a bi-monthly NCJRS Catalog, and electronic newsletter. Includes searchable abstracts database, full-text publications, and information on grants and funding.

National Education Association
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 833-4000
www.nea.org

The NEA has a quite comprehensive Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit posted on its website at www.nea.org/crisis   Includes downloadable forms and information sheets.

National Emergency Medical Services for Children
EMSC National Resource Center
111 Michigan Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20010
(202) 884-4927
www.ems-c.org

EMSC is a national initiative designed to reduce child and youth disability and death due to severe illness or injury. Its goals are to ensure that state-of-the-art emergency medical care is available for all ill or injured children and adolescents; that pediatric services are well integrated into an emergency medical services (EMS) system; and that the entire spectrum of emergency services, including primary prevention of illness and injury, acute care, and rehabilitation, are provided to children and adolescents. A federal grant program supports state and local action.

National Mental Health and Education Center
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 657-0270
www.naspcenter.org/safe_schols/safeschols.htm

The Center is an information and action network to foster best practices in education and mental health for children and families — building upon strengths, understanding diversity, and supporting families. The Center works to provide support for children and families and improve the professional training and practices of school psychologists and pupil service providers. They provide free publications, model programs and resources for parents and educators.

National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA)
1757 Park Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20010
(800) TRY-NOVA or (202) 232-6682
www.try-nova.org

The National Organization for Victim Assistance is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization of victim and witness assistance programs and practitioners, criminal justice agencies and professionals, mental health professionals, researchers, former victims and survivors, and others committed to the recognition and implementation of victim rights and services. Its four purposes are 1) national advocacy, 2) direct services to victims, 3) assistance to professional colleagues, and 4) membership services and activities.

National Resource Center for Safe Schools (NRCSS)
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
PH: (503) 275-0131   (800) 268-2275
www.safetyzone.org/

The National Resource Center for Safe Schools works with schools, communities, state and local education agencies, and other concerned individuals and agencies to create safe learning environments and prevent school violence. Safe school strategies range from establishing youth courts and mentoring programs to incorporating conflict resolution education into school programming to enhancing building safety, hiring school resource officers, establishing or expanding before and after-school programming and adopting policies and procedures that are consistent, clear, and developed collaboratively by the school community.

National School Safety Center (NSSC)
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 373-9977
www.nssc1.org/

NSSC seeks to serve as a catalyst and advocate for the prevention of school crime and violence by providing information and resources and identifying strategies and promising programs which support safe schools for school children. Provides information on school safety programs and activities related to campus security, school law, community relations, student discipline and attendance, and prevention of drug abuse, gangs, bullying and weapons in schools.

National Youth Gang Center
Institute for Intergovernmental Research
P.O. Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317,
(850) 385–0600
www.iir.com/nygc

NYGC identifies promising gang prevention and intervention program strategies, analyzes gang-related legislation, collects and analyzes statistical data on gangs, collects and reviews gang literature, and coordinates activities of the Youth Gang Consortium, a collection of Federal, State, and local agency representatives who wish to ease gang program development, information exchange, and service delivery between agencies.

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (NYVPRC)
8401 Colesville Road
Silver Springs, MD 20904
(866) 723-3968
(301) 562-1001
www.safeyouth.org/

NYVPRC was established as a central source of information on prevention and intervention programs, publications, research, and statistics on violence committed by and against children and teens. The Resource Center is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other Federal agencies. The Center provides information on youth violence including, prevention and intervention programs, publications, research, and statistics on violence committed by and against young

people. The center will also link to private sector resources. Resource Center staff can provide you with information on youth violence, refer you to organizations providing youth violence prevention and intervention services, and link you to technical assistance as well.

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc
1-800-331-0075

The Office for Victims of Crime is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. OVC has established a national toll-free information line for victims and families of victims, staffed by trained mental health professionals to provide crisis counseling. Victims can obtain information about benefits and receive referrals to local resources. OVC has also published ***OVC Handbook for Coping After Terrorism: A Guide to Healing and Recovery***. This handbook provides victims of terrorism with information based on the expertise of mental health professionals, crisis counseling, and victim assistance professionals. The handbook is intended to help victims understand their reactions to an act of terrorism or mass violence. Available free by calling 800-627-6872 and asking for NCJ190249.

U. S. Department of Education
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs
600 Independence Avenue, SW #604 Portals
Washington, D.C. 20202-6123
(202) 260-3954
www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program is the Federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and violence, through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools. These initiatives are designed to prevent violence in and around schools, and strengthen programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related Federal, State and community efforts and resources. There are two main programs: 1) State Grants is a formula grant program that provides funds to state and local education agencies, as well as Governors, for a wide range of school- and community-based education and prevention activities. 2) National Programs carries out a variety of discretionary initiatives that respond to emerging needs. Among these are direct grants to school districts and communities with severe drug and violence problems, program evaluation, and information development and dissemination. Website has information on exemplary and promising programs and key publications on drug and violence prevention, including school safety.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
1100 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530
(202) 514-2058
www.usdoj.gov/cops

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) is the Federal office responsible for advancing community policing. Services include:
- Hiring Grants for the COPS Universal Hiring Program and the COPS in Schools program which provides grants for the hiring of officers to fight crime and disorder around schools.

- Promoting innovative approaches to solving crime.
- Training and technical to agencies, officers and communities to implement and sustain community policing.

Additionally, the Regional Community Policing Institutes create partnerships with law enforcement, educational institutions and community partners to provide innovative and specialized training. The COPS website features downloadable funding application kits, the COPS grantee toolbox, and links to key community policing resources.

VIRGINIA RESOURCES

October Center for the Study and Prevention of Youth Violence
1200 East Broad Street
P.O. Box 980439
Richmond, VA 23298
(804) 628-7233 FAX: (804) 786-0917
http://www.octobercenter.vcu.edu/

The October Center for the Study and Prevention of Youth Violence is a partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University and the Greater Richmond Community. The Center is dedicated to the promotion of culturally sensitive strategies that effectively interrupt the cycle of violence, contribute to healing, and create safe environments where youth and families can grow and thrive, free of violence. The Center will promote state of the art violence prevention around priorities identified by the community. The October Center focuses on coordinating, assisting, and supporting the community and University collaboration in identifying strategies to reduce and prevent youth violence, through action research, knowledge transfer, community development, education, and advocacy.

The Center for School Community Collaboration
School of Education, Virginia Commonwealth University
Oliver Hall, 1015 West Main Street
Richmond, VA 23284-2020
(804) 828-1482
swilliams@vcu.edu

The Center for School-Community Collaboration is located in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Its mission is to prevent and reduce youth problems in Virginia by working with school and community leaders throughout the Commonwealth. This Center's trainings include programs that address parenting skills, bullying prevention, youth violence, gang prevention, teen pregnancy, and crisis management.

The guiding principle of the Center is that community-wide action based on collaboration and cooperation is essential to overcoming negative, destructive factors and to promoting healthy, resilient, productive youth. The Center's training emphasizes community team efforts. The uniqueness of its work is that the staff provides not only information in training seminars and workshops, but also follow-up technical assistance for parent, school and community groups.

Virginia Center for Injury and Violence Prevention
Virginia Department of Health
1500 E. Main St., Room 105
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 692-0104   FAX: (804) 786-0917
http://www.vahealth.org/civp/index.htm

The center's vision is for Virginia to be a place where people live, learn and play safely. Activities include research and assessment, policy development, training and community education, promotion and dissemination of safety devices, public information and funding of local projects. Among areas on which the center focuses are bike and skate safety, child passenger safety, childhood injury prevention, domestic violence prevention, elder safety, fire safety, product safety, sexual violence prevention, suicide prevention, and youth violence prevention.

Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS)
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 371-6506
http://www.virginiaschoolsafety.com

The Center, which is housed at the Department of Criminal Justice Services, was created in April 2000 by the Virginia General Assembly. The Center provides training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety and the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance. The center also serves as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns. Website is a comprehensive resource center for information and research about school safety in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Compensatory Programs
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
Mail Address: P. O. Box 2120   Street Address: James Monroe Building
                Richmond, VA 23218-2120   101 N. 14th Street
                                                           Richmond, VA 23219

1-800-292-3820   (804) 225-2871
http://www.pen.k12.va.us

The Virginia Department of Education is the state agency providing leadership for public education in Virginia. The Department administers The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Programs which are designed to meet the seventh national educational goal by preventing violence in and around schools and by strengthening programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, involve parents and are coordinated with related federal, state and community efforts and resources. Administers SDFSCA grants to local school divisions; provides training, technical assistance, and publications related to the prevention of youth violence and substance abuse.

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
10501 Trade Court
Richmond, VA 23236
(804) 897 6500
http://www.vdem.state.va.us

VDEM is a state agency responsible for coordinating plans and conducting training and exercises that adequately prepare the commonwealth to respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies of all types.

Virginia Department of State Police
Richmond, Virginia 23261-7472
(804) 674-2575   (804) 674-4632
http://www.vsp.state.va.us/

The 4-SAFE VA school safety program offers training in areas such as bomb threat planning and response; basic school safety issues; bus safety; crisis planning; school safety audits; and technical assistance. Troopers and Special Agents trained to be Certified Crime Prevention Specialists are made available to assist the public, including schools, to help ensure that our schools remain as safe as possible. Prevention efforts focus on providing public speakers on a variety of school safety and crime prevention topics, technical assistance, informational materials and brochures.

Virginia Youth Violence Project
Curry School of Education
405 Emmet Street
Charlottesville, VA 22903-2495
(804) 924-8929
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/curry/centers/youthvio/

The mission of the Virginia Youth Violence Project is to identify effective methods and policies for youth violence prevention, especially in school settings. The Project conducts and disseminates research on the understanding and reduction of violent behavior, and provide education, consultation, and training for educators, psychologists, and other colleagues in the social, legal, and human services professions. Their current project is developing threat assessment and intervention guidelines for schools to use when students make threats of violence.

Informational Resources

The following informational resources were compiled by the Eastern Kentucky University Justice and Safety Center as part of a project funded by the National Institute of Justice. Resources listed are from the ***School Critical Incident Planning – An Internet Resource Directory (2001).***

EMERGENCY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

(Resources are Alphabetized by Source)

School Crime Operations Package Software
URL:http://www.schoolcopsoftware.com
Source: Abt Associates/National Institute of Justice
Abstract: This web site offers free school and incident mapping software.

Article: Emergency Preparedness Incident Command Simulator (EPICS)
URL:http://www.hits.astcorp.com/epics
Source: Advanced Systems Technology/National Institute of Justice
Abstract: Computer-based simulator for command and control of critical incidents. Allows rehearsal of emergency operations plans.

A Practical Guide for Crisis Response in Our Schools - A Comprehensive Crisis Response Plan for School Districts
URL:http://schoolcrisisresponse.com
Source: The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress
Abstract: This publication conveys critical information to assist school districts in responding effectively to "everyday crises" as well as school-based disasters.

Recommendations for Safe School Plans
URL:http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/factsheet14.html
Source: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Abstract: This publication makes recommendations on how to develop a safe schools plan.

School Safety Emergency Procedures Guide
URL:http://www.state.de.us/dema/EmerProc.htm
Source: Delaware Emergency Management Agency, Department of Public Safety
Abstract: This online guide includes procedures for assaults,bomb threats, intruder/hostages, weapons/ robbery, serious injury/ death, and suicide/ suicide attempts, among others.

The School Shooter: The Threat Assessment Perspective
URL:http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/school2.pdf
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation
Abstract: This publication presents a systematic approach to threat assessment and intervention. This model was designed to be used by educators, mental health professionals and law enforcement agencies.

Critical Incident Response Training Program
URL:http://www.fletc.gov/ssd/cirtp.htm
Source: Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

Abstract: This site contains information on incident command, site surveys, negotiations, media relations, contingency planning and development training.

Pre-Planning and Site Survey for Critical Incident Response
URL:http://www.tidewater.net/~shamou/
Source: Final Option, Inc.
Abstract: This site contains information on a pre-planning and site survey service.

School Critical Incident Emergency Response Plan
URL:http://www.rwhamlin.com/schoolplans4.htm
Source: R.W. Hamlin and Associates
Abstract: Three public school districts in Jefferson County, Washington, are presently involved in development of coordinated emergency response plans. The goal of the project is to integrate internal school emergency plans and protocols with local emergency response agencies.

A Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence
URL:http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc/svindex.htm
Source: International Association of Chiefs of Police
Abstract: A guide to school violence prevention, threat assessment, crisis planning, major crisis response, dealing with the aftermath, media relations.

360-Degree Imaging
URL:http://www.ipix.com
Source: Ipix
Abstract: This site offers 360-degree imaging for site surveys.

Online Digital Technology Works to Make Schools Virtually Safe
URL:http://www.tacticalvr.com/news.html
Source: ITG- Interactive Tactical Group
Abstract: Article explaining how interactive 360-degree imaging of schools online assists police, SWAT and rescue teams to plan emergency response.

How to Prepare and Respond to a School-Based Critical Incident
URL:http://www.time2act.org/archives/051500.html
Source: Massachusetts State Police
Abstract: The Executive Office of Public Safety, through the Massachusetts State Police and the Department of Fire Services, developed School Emergencies: Community Pre-Planning Guide as a series of questions and recommendations to assist schools and communities in assessing safety of their facilities, and help develop plans to effectively respond to emergencies and afford the greatest protection to students, staff and the general public.

School Crisis Response Plan
URL:http://www.dps.state.mo.us/home/SchoolCrisisPlan.PDF
Source: State of Missouri
Abstract: This site includes guidelines and plans for a school crisis. Prepared by experts in law enforcement, crisis counseling, school/safety security, and educators.

Keep Schools Safe: Crisis Management
URL:http://www.keepschoolssafe.org/cris.htm
Source: National Association of Attorneys General and National School Boards Association
Abstract: This site includes information on law enforcement's role during crisis situations, as well as general information for law enforcement. Also includes information for parents, students, and school administrators.

School Crisis Planning: Questions and Answers
URL:http://www.nasponline.org
Source: National Association of School Psychologists
Abstract: This site includes articles on school critical incidents from pre-planning to crisis management, skills for crisis responders, follow up activities, and creating safe schools.

Security Checklist
URL:http://www.campusjournal.com
Source: Campus Journal
Abstract: This site provides a checklist to assist in the development of an emergency operations plan. More specifically information will include: emergency evacuation, lockdown codes and procedures, crisis intervention and management, emergency threat evaluation, public information and the media, facility surveys, and communications.

Crisis Communication Plan and Tool Kit: Being Diligent—Moving Beyond Crisis
URL:http://www.nea.org/crisis/b3home.html
Source: National Education Association
Abstract: This site emphasizes that sustaining healing and establishing a \"new normal\" is an enormous challenge. It helps identify opportunities to bolster healing and flags trauma-triggers to anticipate.

The Safety Zone
URL:http://www.safetyzone.org
Source: National Resource for Safe Schools
Abstract: This site provides information regarding the importance of 1) Understanding a School Threat; 2) Assessing Information; and 3) Case Management.

Safe from Harm – An Online Anthology on School Security
URL:http://www.asbj.com/security/index.html
Source: National School Boards Association, American School Boards Journal
Abstract: This site provides school and community leaders with youth violence information and a selection of practical resources on school safety.

School Security Services
URL:http://www.schoolsecurity.org/
Source: National School Security Services
Abstract: This site contains information on a national consulting firm specializing in school security and crisis preparedness training, security assessments and related safety consulting for schools.

Guidelines for the Management of Critical Incidents in Schools
URL:http://alex.edfac.usyd.edu.au/LocalResource/DepartPol/critical.html
Source: NSW Department of School Education
Abstract: This site contains guidelines for developing a school critical incident plan, conducting risk assessment, response planning, and evaluating the plan.

Team Packet: School Violence and Law Enforcement Response - Lesson Plan and Articles
URL:http://www.ntoa.org/index2.html
Source: National Tactical Officers Association
Abstract: This site contains information on rapid deployment, site survey, tactical emergency medicine, and explosives recognition - available on CD or printed copy.

SRO- School Resource Officer Leadership Program
URL:http://www.foxvalley.tec.wi.us/ojjdp/sro.htm
Source: OJJDP, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Fox Valley
Technical College
Abstract: The purpose of this program is to demonstrate standards of excellence and
best practices in the enhanced role of the school resource officers as leaders in planning
and maintaining a safe school environment. Topics covered include: leadership role of
the SRO in developing and implementing a safe school plan, critical incident planning,
school security, identification and utilization of risk and protective factors, and legal
issues.

Crisis Communication Plan and Tool Kit: Being Prepared Before a Crisis
URL:http://www.nea.org/crisis/b1home.html
Source: National Education Association
Abstract: This site explains how advance thinking and preparation cannot be
emphasized enough when preparing with a school critical incident.

Guidelines for the Management of Critical Incidents in Schools
URL:http://alex.edfac.usyd.edu.au/LocalResource/DepartPol/critical.html
Source: NSW Department of School Education
Abstract: This site contains guidelines for developing a school critical incident plan,
conducting risk assessments, response planning, and evaluating the plan.

Violent Intruder: Police and Educators' Response (VIPER) Program
URL:http://www.ontariopolice.org/viper.html
Source: Ontario (CA) Police Department
Abstract: The objective of the program is to create a basic response plan for use by law
enforcement, school officials, students and the rest of the community in the event that an
armed intruder threatens a local school.

Crisis Management
URL:http://www.osba.org/hotopics/crismgmt/index.htm
Source: Oregon School Boards Association: Crisis Management
Abstract: This site contains various plans and policys for dealing with a critical incident.

Pierce Responder System
URL:http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/abtus/ourorg/is/client_server_software_products.htm
Source: Pierce County (WA) Information Services Department
Abstract: The web-based Responder System contains information, floor plans, pictures,
and aerial maps of schools and public facilities. The data can be accessed by
emergency personnel in the field via wireless modems.

Police Foundation
URL:http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/vol3issue2.pdf
Source: Police Foundation
Abstract: This site provides information on a crime mapping laboratory/mapping in
community policing training – creating a tactical plan in preparation for school violence
using GIS.

Security Program Development
URL:http://www.irsafeschools.com/index2.cfm
Source: Safe Schools
Abstract:The plan and site survey provided on this site makes it possible to effectively
evaluate your facility and develop cost-effective solutions that can be implemented in a
timely fashion.

Conducting a Self-Assessment of School Safety
URL:http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/1996_02/stephens.htm
Source: The School Administrator Web Edition, February 1996
Abstract: This site outlines the importance of conducting an annual school safety assessment.

School Violence
URL:http://www.schoolprotectiveservices.com/new_page_1.htm
Source: School Protective Services
Abstract: This site provides information on training, seminars and technical assistance designed to teach school personnel, law enforcement professionals, and emergency service providers how to deal with: threat assessment, intervention strategies, emergency planning, and response protocols through seminars, etc.

School Safety Programs
URL:http://www.li-scope.org/schools/antiviolence.html
Source: SCOPE
Abstract: This organization offers safe school plans, critical incident planning: Development of a Critical Incident Plan, Tactical Flip Charts, Readiness Service, Training of Clerical and Support Staff, School Monitors and Bus Drivers, and Media and Community Relations.

Safe Orderly Schools Plan
URL:http://www.tacticalalliance.com/sos.htm
Source: Tactical Alliance
Abstract: The Safe Orderly Schools Plan includes steps that are crucial to safe school planning – assessment and prevention. The four-part plan takes schools step-by-step, checklist-by-checklist as they develop their own, fully individualized plans.

Classroom Killers? Hallway Hostages?
URL:http://www.schoolsecurity.org/crisis-book.html
Source: Kenneth Trump, Corwin Press
Abstract: National school safety and crisis preparedness expert Ken Trump dispels the myths, misconceptions, and hype surrounding the lessons learned from national school violence crises and shifting security threat trends in this new book.

National Threat Assessment Center
URL:http://www.ustreas.gov/usss/
Source: United States Secret Service
Abstract: NTAC will develop and provide threat assessment training and conduct operational research relevant to public official, workplace, stalking/domestic, and school-based violence. In addition, NTAC will offer its assistance to organizations interested in developing threat assessment programs.

Safe School Initiative: An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools
URL:http://www.treas.gov/usss
Source: United States Secret Service
Abstract: This site contains an analysis of school shooters.

Develop a Plan
URL:http://www.ussafeschools.org/develop.htm
Source: US Safe Schools
Abstract: This site inncludes information on how to develop a security plan and a safety plan.

Emergency Operations Planning Tools for State Agencies
URL:http://www.das.state.ut.us/cc/jan2001/planningtools.html
Source: Utah Department of Administrative Services
Abstract: This site contains information on emergency operations plan development, incident command, planning for active shooters, hostage situations, bombs, and bomb threats.

RECOVERY

(Resources are Alphabetized by Source)

Providing Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) to Individuals and Communities in Situational Crisis
URL:http://www.aaets.org/arts/art54.htm
Source: Joseph A. David, Ph.D., LL.D (hon.), B.C.E.T.S., F.A.A.E.T.S.
Abstract: This site reviews the importance of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, NOVA (National Organization for Victim Assistance), and CISD key points.

Domestic Terrorism Concept - FEMA
URL:http://www.fema.gov/r-n-r/conplan/
Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency
Abstract: This site contains the United States Government Interagency Domestic Terrorism Concept of Operation Plan.

Responding to School Violence - After a Crisis
URL:http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc/svaftercrisis.htm
Source: The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
Abstract: This site contains a guide for preventing and responding to school violence after a crisis. Section six(6) describes the recovery process following a school crisis.

National Emergency Assistance Team (NEAT): Helping Schools, Families, Communities, Cope with Crisis.
URL:http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/index.html
Source: National Association of School Psychologists
Abstract: "The National Emergency Assistance Team (NEAT) is part of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) strategic commitment to help schools, families and communities cope with crisis situations." (Includes information about NEAT – its purpose, goals, etc.)

Death: Dealing with Crisis at School; Crisis Follow-up Activities; Schoolyard Tragedies: Coping with the Aftermath
URL:http://www.nasponline.org
Source: National Association of School Psychologists
Abstract: This site contains articles on school critical incidents from pre-planning to crisis management, skills for crisis responders, follow-up activities, and creating safe schools.

School Violence: Are You Prepared to Respond?
URL:http://www.ncvc.org/newsltr/schvio.htm
Source: Trudy Gregorie, Director of Training, National Center for Victims of Crime
Abstract: This article explains the need for preparedness and outlines components of emotional first aid in the aftermath of a critical incident.

NOVA – National Organization for Victim Assistance
URL:http://www.try-nova.org
Source: NOVA
Abstract: The NOVA website provides information on victim assistance, how to get help, resources for victims/survivors, crisis response specialists, as well as information on crisis intervention.

Trauma Center Community Services
URL:http://www.traumacenter.org/commservs.html
Source: The Trauma Center Community Services
Abstract: This group provides "unique school and community- based trauma recovery services to children, adolescents, and their adult caretakers." Their goal is to decrease the negative effects of maltreatment and exposure to critical incidents on children and youth.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
(Resources are Alphabetized by Source)

Critical Incident Stress Management
URL:http://www.9-1-1magazine.com/info/resources/0799linksAndRes.html
Source: 9-1-1 Magazine
Abstract: This site lists books and other resources related to critical incident stress management.

Traumatic Stress Resources
URL:http://www.aaets.org/trresp.htm
Source: The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress
Abstract: This site offers links to many articles related to traumatic stress stemming from a variety of violent incidents.

American Counseling Association
URL:http://www.counseling.org/consumers_media/
Source: American Counseling Association
Abstract: This site provides information on five(5) ways to cope with a crisis situation and ten(10) ways to recognize Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.
URL:http://www.icisf.org/
Source: The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. (ICISF)
Abstract: This site contains information on the prevention and mitigation of disabling stress through the provision of: education, training, and support services for all emergency service professions.

Selected Online Publications

The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools
  National Institute of Justice, 1999
  http://www.ncjrs.org/school/178265.pdf

Behavioral Interventions: Creating a Safe Environment in our Schools
  National Mental Health Education Center, 1999
  http://www.naspweb.org/center/pdf/nmhec.pdf

Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action
  National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2000
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm

A Blueprint for Safe Schools
  Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2001
  http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/Blueprint%20for%20
  Safe%20Schools.htm

Blueprints: A Violence Prevention Initiative
  Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999
  http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/fact.html#fs99110

Blueprints for Violence Prevention
  Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2001
  http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/187079.pdf

Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools
  Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998
  http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/violvict.html#167888

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools
  U.S. Department of Education, 1998
  http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

Effective Comprehensive Prevention Programs: A Planning Guide
  Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996
  http://www.nwrac.org/pub/library/e/e_effective.pdf

Families and Schools Together: Building Relationships
  Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999
  http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/delinq.html#173423

Great Ideas for Safe Schools
  California Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
  2001. http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/greatideas.pdf

Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence
  International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1999
  http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc/schoolviolence.pdf

How Students Can Avoid School Victimization
  Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence 2001
  http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/Student%20Victimization.htm

Introduction to NBC Terrorism: An Awareness Primer and Preparedness Guide for Emergency Responders
      Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association (DERA). October 2001. http://www.disasters.org/dera/library/Heyer%20WMD.pdf

Overview of Strategies to Reduce School Violence
      ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 1996
      http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/digests/dig115.html

Preventing School Violence: Plenary Papers of the 1999 Conference on Criminal Justice
      Research and Evaluation-Enhancing Policy and Practice Through   Research, Volume 2, National Institute of Justice, 2000
      http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/180972.pdf

Preventing School Violence: A Practical Guide to Comprehensive Planning
      Indiana Education Policy Center, 2001
      http://www.indiana.edu/~iepc/welcome.html

Preventing Violence the Problem-Solving Way
      Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999
      http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/violvict.html#172847

Probing the Roots and Prevention of Youth Violence
      Education Vital Signs, 1998
      http://www.asbj.com/evs/98/schoolsafety.html

Rebuilding Schools as Safe Havens: A Typology for Selecting and Integrating Violence
      Prevention Strategies
      Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2000
      http://www.nwrac.org/pub/library/r/r_rebuild.pdf

Recommendations for Safe School Plans
      Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1998
      http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/factsheet14.html

Safe Communities-Safe Schools: Creating a Crisis Plan
      Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2001
      http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/SCSS%20Crisis%20Plan.html

Safe Communities-Safe Schools: Discipline Codes
      Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2000
      http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/disciplinecodes.html

Safe Communities-Safe Schools: What is a Safe School?
      Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2001
      http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/SCSS%20What%20is%20Safe%20School.html

SafeFutures: Partnerships to Reduce Youth Violence and Delinquency
      Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996
      http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/fact.html#fs-9638

Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide
   U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 2000
   http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/ActionGuide/

A Safe Learning Environment for Every Vermont Student: Community-Wide Approaches to School Violence
   Vermont National Education Association, 1998
   http://www.vtnea.org/violence.htm

Safer Schools: Strategies for Educators and Law Enforcement to Prevent Violence
   National Crime Prevention Council, 2001
   http://www.ncpc.org/eduleo.htm

Safe School Planning
   Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2001
   http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/factsheets/factsheet4.html

School and Community Interventions to Prevent Serious and Violent Offending
   Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999
   http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/177624.pdf

The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment
   Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000
   http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/school2.pdf

School Strategies for Increasing Safety
   Institute for Urban and Minority Education, 2000
   http://iume.tc.columbia.edu/choices/briefs/choices06.html

Stand Up and Start a School Crime Watch!
   Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999
   http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/94601.pdf

Ten Steps to Safer Schools
   American School Board, 1998
   http://www.asbj.com/security/contents/0398stephens.html

Warning Signs: A Violence Prevention Guide for Youth
   MTV and the American Psychological Association, 1999
   http://helping.apa.org/warningsigns/index.html

What Works in Youth Violence Prevention
   Virginia Youth Violence Project, 1999
   http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/curry/centers/youthvio/subpages/
   current/special/truewhatworks.html

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Office for Victims of Crime. (September 2001). <u>Handbook for Coping After Terrorism</u>. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

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